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By MAY FREUD DICKENSON

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLANNERY



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Saucy Stories

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From the Editorial Point of View



THERE is an unusually interesting novelette next month by *Elizabeth Walsh* called **MISS BROADWAY OF NOWHERE**. It is the story of Nat Seccombe, open-handed, young, rich, unscrupulous and popular. Baby Morrison, the latest beauty on the theatrical firmament, who is twenty but looks sixteen, plays a leading part in this gripping novel; but the best is reserved for Lois, who is almost run down by the young millionaire's car. He determines to take her to the big banquet he is giving to his friends. Against her will she is dragged in to the brilliant scene and introduced as **MISS BROADWAY OF NOWHERE**. What happens to her, the love that is made to her by the wrong and the right sort of men, the jealousy of the better known beauties, is told in such a manner as to hold one's interest to the last sentence.



NEXT month we shall begin a series of unusual stories called **THE MAN WHOM LIFE PASSED BY**. *Winston Bouve* is the author and the first of the series is **A DAUGHTER OF JOY**. The man whom life has passed by is a rich, lonely cripple who because of his affliction has awakened love in no woman's heart. He lives alone in a big house, rarely going out except at night. It was on one of these rambles he meets the woman whose pity he is able to buy.



THE **WISE GUY**, by *Dayton Stoddart*, is the amusing story of Jimmy Tilford who belonged to the class which always has a large waiting list. A wise guy is one who falls twice as hard and fast as the rest. Jimmy regarded girls as pleasant playthings to pass on to the next when their mission so far as he was concerned was done. Jimmy fell fast and hard as you will find out.



HOME TOWN STUFF is a most entertaining story. It is about Patsy of the Gaiety and William Walker Jackson, who sent his card to her dressing room by a stage hand. "Did he say he was a friend of mine?" she asked. "Yeh," said the stage hand, "said he was from your home town—Boobville, I think he said." Out of this usual beginning an unusual and amusing story grows. *Carolina Jewett* wrote it.

Other stories will be by *Harold de Polo*, *C. S. Montanye*, *Murray Leinster*, and *Thomas Edgelow*, all of whom are old favorites.

Love in the Jungle

A Complete Novelette

By May Freud Dickenson

I



RHODA WALER gazed eagerly out of the first-class compartment of the Calcutta-Bombay express. At last she was really in India—India, where her father had spent most of his life—India, the land of

mystery about which so many of her dreams had centered—India the magnificent, the gorgeous, with her gold-trapped elephants, her jeweled temples, her royal rajahs.

Her cheeks pressed against the rain-flecked window pane, the girl saw flat, water-soaked paddy fields where the vivid, yellow-green spears of young rice just pierced the dark muti. Here and there palm trees or clumps of feathery bamboo shaded the miserable clustered mud-huts of the villages. A crumbling mosque blurred past through the drizzling mist of the monsoon.

Rhoda gave a disappointed little shiver. It was dreary and dirty and ugly, not a bit like what she had imagined. Bare, brown, half-naked figures scurried along under soiled white cotton umbrellas; in the shallow pools along the railroad track, men and women bathed in the muddy slime, washed out their clothes and drew their drinking-water in terra-cotta jars. She saw huge steel gray buffaloes, hump-backed bullocks, scrawny, under-sized cows and herds of frisking goats. On every station plat-

form were hordes of men in flowing dhotis and women with rings in their noses, their ears rimmed with jewelry, massive anklets on their bare feet, glass and brass bangles on their arms, their faces painted with caste marks, their black, oily hair covered by coarse draped saris.

A sense of depression stole over the girl. Perhaps it was because she was going to face the unknown—a father she could not remember and of whom she knew practically nothing. He had simply been the source of a generous quarterly allowance which had given her all the necessities and put her comfortably through college.

Her mother had died in India and Rhoda had been sent back to the States to be reared and educated by an old aunt; but she had always determined to come out to India some day and get to know this father of hers. She had written him numberless letters telling that she meant to come, but invariably his answer had been emphatically to urge her to stay at home. On her graduation from Radcliffe, however, the girl took things into her own hands.

She was all alone in the world now, the old aunt having died and left Rhoda a modest legacy. This was her chance to go out to see her father before she should start teaching school, so as to earn her own living. She packed her bags and trunks, wrote her father a gaily defiant letter announcing her de-

parture and set off in high spirits for Barampader, India.

And this was the last lap of her long and wonderful journey. In less than half an hour she would be there. She had cabled from Singapore, saying she was on her way and wired from Calcutta, stating the hour of her arrival. Of course he would be down at the station to meet her. How strange it would be to see one's own father for the first time in fifteen years!

Rhoda forcibly shook off all gloomy thoughts and smiled at herself in the mirror of her vanity case; she hoped he would like her, find her pretty and nice. Back in Boston, people had been inclined to rave extravagantly over the girl's delicate charm, but it had never spoiled her. "My hair's just a faded yellow," she would laugh, "and my poor nose is so unclassic." Withal, however, she was sweet to look on, a slight bit of a thing, dainty and lovable.

At last the train pulled in at Rhoda's station; the little cars jerked to a stop and the girl leaned eagerly out of the window to catch a first glimpse of her father. She was positive she would know him from his photographs, if not from the tumultuous beating of her heart when they should meet. He would take her in his arms and kiss her; surely he would be glad to see her after she had come such a long, long way.

The door of her compartment was thrown open; Rhoda stood ready to get off. A half a dozen ragged coolies scrambled into the car, quarreling over the luggage. The girl jumped to the ground, looking eagerly about her.

The usual jabbering crowd of turbaned natives squatted on their haunches on the damp platform; half a dozen lay sprawled out asleep, like filthy corpses with their faces covered.

Rhoda noticed anxiously that there was no one waiting to meet her.

A sinking sense of alarm seized her

—the bedlam of chattering bewildered her. Her bags and boxes piled about her, she looked nervously up and down the platform.

No one seemed to pay the slightest attention to her except occasionally to stare into her face with the crudest curiosity. Rhoda felt the quick tears burn in her eyes. What was she to do? Where was she to go? Her father might surely have come to meet her or at least have sent someone.

A railway guard with a red flap like a rabbit's ear protruding from his pur-garee passed her. Rhoda tried to ask him if he knew where her father was, but he understood no English and her efforts were futile.

Just as the girl had determined to abandon her luggage and go to find someone to whom she could explain her predicament, she saw a man on horseback in a white tophee galloping rapidly toward the station.

It must be her father hurrying to welcome her; a lump came into her throat. She saw him throw himself out of the saddle and come swiftly to her; she moved toward him, her hands outstretched, her eager little face tender with emotion.

But as he came closer she saw with a start of the keenest disappointment that it was not, could not be her father. This man was young and despite the perfect Europeanization of his riding-clothes unmistakably a native. His dark eyes burned in his finely cut sawn face, his black hair waved back from his forehead as he raised his tophee.

"Miss Waler, I believe," he said in a voice in which only the slightest accent lingered to mar the perfection of the English. "A thousand pardons for having kept you waiting. Your father—"

"Yes," she interrupted.

"Mr. Waler was away so he did not receive your Calcutta wire. He is ex-

pected to return, though, this evening, so I came to meet you."

"That was very kind of you, Mr. —?" she hesitated.

"Das," he answered. "Ganesh Das. I am your father's assistant."

They walked through the station to the rear. He turned to give the coolies directions in rapid Hindustani and the contrast in his almost obsequious manner to her, and his harsh imperiousness in addressing the coolies struck Rhoda as singularly unpleasant. Of course she was immensely relieved that he had come for her, but there was something scarcely definable about him that she did not like.

"I am prejudiced," Rhoda said to herself; "it's only because he isn't white."

"I am afraid, Miss Waler," Das said regretfully, "it may not be very comfortable for you getting to the bungalow from here. The roads are almost impassable or I should suggest a tonga. However, I believe unless you would consent to ride my horse, a palky would be the best way."

"I do not ride," said Rhoda staring curiously at a large, black, coffin-shaped box on the ground before them.

"The Mohammedan ladies use these," Das said, tapping the palanquin with his riding crop, "they are quite purdah then." He pushed back a little sliding shutter.

"Am I to get in that?" cried the girl in amazement.

"I think it is really the best way," he answered. "You will be carried and we'll make good time."

Rhoda could not overcome her reluctance to get in; it looked so stuffy and horrid. Imagine females boxing themselves up in this absurd fashion when they wanted to go out. She knew that women in the East were veiled, but somehow she thought it belonged more in fiction than fact.

Smiling a little at the ridiculousness

of the situation, she crawled into the palky and settling herself on the cushions felt the jerking lift as the coolies picked her up and started off.

"You will find Barampadar interesting," he said presently; "you're in a native state, right in the heart of the jungle. The natives are neither Hindu nor Moslem, but one of the aboriginal tribes driven back into these hills. They do not speak Hindustani, but have an unwritten language of their own. As yet they are fairly unspoiled and absolutely primitive; you'll see them go out into the jungle to hunt wild elephants and leopards, armed with nothing but poisoned arrows and bows."

"How thrilling!" cried Rhoda. "And are they very ferocious?"

"Not at all," he said, "they are quite tame. The Santals are a very peaceful people until," he paused significantly, "until aroused."

Rhoda glanced up at him and surprised on his face a flash of expression so utterly malevolent that she caught her breath sharply. It frightened her, but in a second it was gone and he was bending toward her, suave, pleasant and smiling.

"Just at present there is a little disturbance simmering," he continued. "That is what prevented Mr. Waler from meeting you."

"There's danger then!" the girl cried.

"None," he answered, "though I am sure had your father thought that you would be here so soon he might have made other arrangements for you. However," and his white teeth gleamed through his full lips, "there's nothing to be afraid of, I assure you. The Santals are not like the war-like border tribes of whom you are probably thinking."

Rhoda said no more. She felt vaguely disturbed, oppressed as by a foreboding of evil.

"You are a Radcliffe girl, I believe,"

Das said, breaking the short silence. "I am Harvard, 1909."

"Are you?" said Rhoda with forced cordiality. She was beginning to feel that there was something presumptuous about him. She glanced at him critically, rather resenting the fact that he should have gone to Harvard. She had to admit, though, that he cut a distinctly presentable figure—his clothes were irreproachable, he sat his horse well, his skin was light in color and yet the girl told herself, though she could not say just why, she found him utterly detestable.

"I am sometimes sorry that I left the States," Das went on smugly. "I had a splendid time at college; I won the swimming championship, my junior year."

He waited for a response from the girl, but receiving none went placidly on: "Did you know the Willowthorpes of Back Bay? Anne Willowthorpe was a great friend of mine. A couple of chaps I know have stayed in Boston; lots of them have brought back American wives."

And then Rhoda was able to define the subtle antipathy that he roused in her. It was just that—in his eyes, no barrier stood between the native and the white.

She wished suddenly the jolting ride would end.

"You can see the bungalow ahead," said the Bengalee; "the mine is just beyond it."

Rhoda looked eagerly. They passed through a wide, rickety gate into the compound of a large bungalow with the dilapidated look which age gives buildings in the tropics. Bold red and yellow blotched cannas flanked the uncared-for garden paths, the marigolds were rank and overgrown, banana and papaya trees grew in irregular confusion, but two mighty mangos on either side of the bungalow loaned it a dig-

nity that its lack of paint and straggly vines denied it.

In front of the door, Rhoda got out of the palky and looked about her. The sun was sinking garishly behind the purpling hills—the air of neglect and desolation about the place chilled her.

"It will be seven o'clock before Mr. Waler returns," Das said standing beside her, his tophee in his hand. "He would wish you to go in and make yourself comfortable."

Rhoda slowly climbed the low flight of steps on to the screened-in verandah. A half dozen turbaned servants in more or less immaculate white salaamed as she entered.

"Thank you very much for bringing me here," said the girl, turning to the Bengalee, who stood waiting outside.

"It was a pleasure, Miss Waler," he said. "Good evening," and he walked away, his horse following him.

Rhoda let the screen door slam behind her and took a few impatient steps up and down the porch. A minar bird in a wicker cage fluttered its wings drowsily—behind her the "salaam men-sahib" of the servants droned in her ears. She was conscious of the faint jingle of bracelets and of being watched by many eyes.

How she wished her father would come! How terribly lonely it was here, surrounded by all these dark, strange people. She saw the slit of a shutter move slightly and with a frown followed the bearer into her father's house.

II

It was nearly seven o'clock when Rhoda, washed and brushed up after her trip, stepped out again on to the screened-in verandah.

What a dreadful place the bungalow was! The huge, high-ceilinged rooms were bleak and ugly as a barracks, uncared for and untidy.

The durries on the floors had become mouldy, the woodwork was half eaten away by white ants, and spider webs spanned the punkah ropes, heavy and gray with dust. Out on the porch the curtains were torn and hung askew from the pulleys, a kerosene lamp smoked on a broken wicker table and great bugs and bats attracted by the light within, beat violently against the screens.

A restlessness possessed Rhoda. She went back into the living-room—little lizards ran over the white washed walls, where some cigarette ads and a couple of Gibson girl posters hung crookedly. A worn card-table, a soot-smearsed fireplace and a couple of tumble-down chairs completed the furnishings.

Rhoda went swiftly through the dining-room, out on the back porch, and then into the deepening twilight.

Suddenly she caught her breath and gave a little choked cry. A man had just ridden up on horseback and springing from the saddle, shouted for the boy.

Rhoda stopped a moment in the shadows of the great mango, her hands clasped over her beating heart. It was her father. Even in the faint light she recognized the thin, straight nose and the close-clipped moustache of the photograph she had of him at home.

"Gawan," he called, cursing so violently in a mixture of Hindustani and English that the girl shrank back, terrified.

Once again he called, and as the native groom came running forward, still winding his purgaree about his head, Waler turned on him fiercely. Rhoda did not know what he said—she only saw her father lift his riding crop and bring it crashingly down on the bare black shoulders of the native.

She gave a low cry. A second blow slashed across the skin of the whimper-

ing wretch as he cowered before Waler and then led away the pony.

Rhoda could scarcely creep out from under the mango. Fear and horror filled her—what kind of a brute or tyrant was this father of hers. She saw him go up on to the porch, she must go to him. Just as she moved a step forward Gawan, the syce, passed close by her, muttering to himself, his fist clenched vengefully, his dark face livid with hatred. In the shadows, he turned about and spat contemptuously toward the bungalow.

Rhoda slipped away silently. Her breath came brokenly, her hand trembled as she lightly pushed open the screen door. She could see her father lying back in a great scoop-shaped lounge-chair, a peg on the wide arm beside him. He saw her, but made no motion to get up; instead he looked at her, hard and steadily, for a full moment.

"So you've come after all," he said brusquely. "I told you, begged you to stay at home." His hands twitched nervously as he gulped down his whiskey and soda. "I never imagined you'd get here so soon," he concluded irritably.

His curt tone cut the girl to the heart. "You are not angry at me for coming?" she pleaded wistfully. Her impulse was to fling herself into her father's arms—this seemed so strange and cold a greeting after so many years; he must care for her a little—she was his only child. She glanced shyly at the lean face over which the colorless, dried skin seemed drawn too taut, at the haggard line of nose and mouth.

"You're blonde like your mother," he said slowly, shifting himself erect in his chair. "You should not have come, though," he said curtly. "Had I known in time or received your wire, you should never have come here; this is no place for you. There's not a white

woman here, and I'm the only European for forty miles."

"But I didn't come to be with other people," urged Rhoda. "I just want to stay with you a little while—to get to know you—"

"It's out of the question," Waler interrupted. "You do not understand conditions. We are in India, not in the U. S. A. There are a dozen reasons why I can't have you here—it's not fit for you."

"But if it's good enough for you, father," she said with trembling lips.

"Besides, it's the rainy season," he went on impatiently. "This is a regular fever trap, a pest hole, and if you want further reasons, just at present conditions here are upset and decidedly unsafe."

"Please, father," she persisted, "I do want to stay; I can do so many things for you. This place looks as though it needed a woman—I can be good to you and make you so comfortable."

"You do not know what you're talking about," said Waler, looking nervously behind him over his shoulder. "I shall send a chit immediately and wire Mrs. Townsend in at Tashi to expect you."

Rhoda felt that her heart must break with the agony of her disappointment. She could say no more, but stood with eyes downcast, her hands twisting pathetically.

"Sit down, sit down," Waler said more kindly. "I do not mean to be harsh, but it was foolhardy of you to come. There's no train away from here until noon tomorrow, and it's taking a chance you're even being here tonight." He ran his thin browned hand over his prematurely white hair and again glanced furtively behind him as if conscious of being under observation. "The servants made you comfortable?" he inquired. "I was sorry that I could not meet you."

He jerked himself out of the low chair and stood for a moment in front of his daughter.

"I'll go get ready for karna," he said. In the doorway he turned back to look at the girl. "By God, but you're like your mother," he said hoarsely and went into the house.

For a moment, Rhoda stood fighting back her choking sobs. A sense of desolation and terrible loneliness overcame her—her father was angry that she had come, he had not been glad to see her. He was making her leave the next day—he was the only one she had in the whole world and he did not want her.

Through her tears she saw a slender crescent moon, low cradled in the sapphire sky—one by one the stars pierced the darkness. Far off she could hear the plaintive cooing of the doves, the howling of the jackals and the monotonous, mournful beat of the tomtoms in the native village.

The weird fascination of India seemed to sway over her like a spell. She took a deep breath of the flower-scented air, pungent with the odor of marigolds and stretched out her arms forlornly. She would have to go away—leave this land of charm and mystery and return to Boston prosaically to teach school. It was all that was left for her to do. She dabbed her tear-stained eyes and stiffened her quivering lips.

"I don't want to leave India," she murmured rebelliously just as the clamor of many voices reached her ears. She looked out through the screens; a half a dozen lanterns were moving rapidly toward the bungalow and their flickering light showed up an excited, gesticulating group hurriedly approaching.

III

A THRILL of nervous excitement seized Rhoda. The word "danger" seemed to reverberate through her brain

—the insinuation of trouble in what the Bengalee had told her and her father's outspoken hint came forcibly to her.

The lantern light flashed on thin, black limbs and then Rhoda was able to distinguish a half a dozen coolies, some babus, their shirt-tails hanging loose, a little man in European clothes and Ganesh Das.

"Good evening, Miss Waler," the Bengalee said courteously.

The little Parsee raised the queer, stiff, black cap he wore and bowed deeply.

"Mr. Waler has returned," he said. "May we see him?"

Rhoda heard her father's voice behind her. "Well," he snapped irritably, "what's the row now?"

"These junglies report," said Das, pointing to the coolies, naked except for a strip of loin cloth, their long black hair lying on their shoulders or twisted into a pug at the back of the neck, "that Peripadar, three miles away, has just been looted and burned."

"The Knot has been sent here, sir," the Parsee added. His face was drawn with fear and his limbs shook.

Groans of abject terror rose from the group about him; the store babu, his eyes bulging, wrung his hands; the doctor babu clutched his orange cashmere shawl about him, shivering miserably.

"So the Knot has been sent here, eh?" Waler repeated thoughtfully. "You're sure, Pestonjee?"

"Absolutely certain, sir," the little Parsee quavered. "These coolies of mine have told me five police also, sir, have been killed. Miss Waler, if I may be excused, should on no account remain here."

Waler chewed viciously at the ragged end of his gray moustache. Then he turned to his daughter. "You must not be alarmed, my dear," he said, his eyes blazing contemptuously. "These people are the most wretched, whining, ex-

citable cowards on earth. Sure, Pestonjee," he sneered, "it was only five police, not twenty-five, they killed?"

"Positively, sir," returned the Parsee, "the brother of this man here saw three of them lying dead in the bazaar with their throats cut from ear to ear. I assure you, sir, the mawaris all fled, taking their families with them, but one who stayed behind was driven into his house with his wife and children and the place burnt about them." Beads of sweat stood out on the forehead of the little man; he was spokesman for the others, who shuddered at the tale.

"They broke into the treasury of the Maharajah and took a lak of rupees," Pestonjee hurried on, "and we have several thousands in the safe to pay off the coolies."

Throughout all the excited, high-pitched talk Ganesh Das stood slightly aside, a superior smile on his lips as if in this crisis to emulate the poise and calm of the white man.

"The station babu," Pestonjee went on, "has taken his family to hide in the jungle." He gazed again significantly at the girl, then his own anxiety re-overwhelming him, he mopped his head. "The money, sir—what is to be done about that? They know I have it here—if I hide it they will torture me till I give it up."

"Shut up your infernal whimpering," snarled Waler. "Go back to your quarters, you'll be safe enough." He paused dramatically. "I've wired for help already. There will be troops here on a special tonight."

The relief of Pestonjee and the babus was not less extreme than had been their distress. They began chattering eagerly, gesticulating wildly, their teeth gleaming in smiles of satisfaction. Only the Bengalee seemed unmoved, and Rhoda, glancing down curiously at this demonstration of unrepressed emotion, saw again on his face that malevolent

expression that had startled her in the afternoon.

"The troops are expected here to-night, sir?" he asked quietly.

"Yes," Waler said, and turning on his heel, strode back into the bungalow.

The very suaveness of Das' voice seemed to fill the girl with alarm. Something underhand and sinister threatened them—something terrible was going to happen.

It was as if the exaggerated fear of the natives had communicated itself to the girl. She saw the little group melt hurriedly away into the darkness; only the Bengalee lingered.

"I hope, Miss Waler," he said, "you are not distressed by all this excitement."

"I'm not," she answered; "but what is this Knot they are talking about?"

"It is a symbol among these Santals—a few cotton threads dipped, I believe, in camphor and tied in a knot. It is sent at night from village to village, from house to house. It binds them to stick together for whatever may happen. In my province, Bengal, they send five mango leaves, some chillies and a pinch of salt. It usually means trouble."

"What is the matter now?" asked Rhoda.

"Some new forest and liquor taxes Heckers, the Political Agent, has just put into force. They are thoroughly aroused about it, for they in their primitive way, too, believe in India for the Indians."

Rhoda remained silent for a moment. There was a veritable threat in his words "India for the Indians." Terrible tales she had read of the Mutiny drifted through her brain.

In the half light his eyes blazed wildly, then suddenly, as if recalling himself, he added in a low voice, "For speaking as I have done to you, were I to be overheard they might send me to the Andaman Islands. There are many

of us in exile, such is the tyranny under which we suffer."

"But," argued Rhoda, "I have always read and heard that English rule was the salvation of India."

"We cannot drive the European out of India," he said, "but there is one simple solution of the problem."

"What is that?" asked Rhoda.

"Intermarriage," he answered quickly, "the breaking down of the false barrier between race and race."

Instinctively the girl shrank from him, all the innate pride of blood and birth flaming in her delicate face.

"You," he went on passionately, "lovely and young and beautiful—why should you not stay among us, be one of us? I loved you the moment I saw you. My blood seemed turned to fire, my heart to flames—all my life I have waited for that divine thrill. The women of my country cannot stir my senses as you have done; you with your skin of milk and pale roses, your hair of gold, your face uncovered—I shall give you jewels, everything—"

"Stop!" cried the girl fiercely, her lips quivering with indignation. "How dare you speak to me like this! I shall tell my father."

"Your father," he sneered. "Yes, tell your father. Ask him what he thinks of intermarriage."

"At home," Rhoda said in a low voice, "you would be horsewhipped for this. Good night."

She turned sharply on her heel but he caught her wrist and drew her towards him.

"You do not know what you say, Miss Waler," he cried thickly. "Do not be rash. Dangers surround you of which you know nothing. Your father for years has been harsh and cruel to the coolies here; they are going to have their revenge, and you will share it unless you let me protect you."

"You coward!" she breathed. "Let

go my wrist or I shall call my father."

"You shall listen to me yet," he said in her ear. "You and I shall taste together the sweets of Indian love."

With all her slight strength the girl wrenched herself from his hold and, trembling with rage and revulsion, fled back into the bungalow.

IV

It was ten o'clock when Rhoda, wearied and discouraged, crept under the canopy of the mosquito net into her bed.

She was too excited and upset to sleep, but lay tossing restlessly under the slow swing of the squeaking punkah.

It seemed that she lay there hours, when the roar of a train speeding through the night startled her.

It must be the special with the troops her father had spoken of.

She sat up, her two braids of light hair falling over her shoulders and giving her small face a wistfully childlike look. She was inexpressibly glad they had come; now her father would be safe from the coolies who threatened him and Das could not harm her. She listened sharply—then in a short while again she heard the clamor of many voices, and through her wide French window she could see the flicker of lanterns, moving toward the bungalow.

Slipping on her kimono, Rhoda stood up in the bed, afraid to step down again on the treacherous floor. She could hear the regular tramp of booted feet on the path outside, then the slam of the screen door and a man's voice calling, "Waler—Waler."

There was no reply. Rhoda clutched her kimono closer. She had left her father in the living-room; he told her that he would sit up and wait until the soldiers came; he had probably fallen asleep or gone to bed.

"I say, Waler!" the voice called out

again more impatiently—and again there was no answer.

"I must go see," said Rhoda, and screwing up her courage she cautiously got into her sandals and hurried out through the window onto the verandah.

A tall man in khaki shorts started in astonishment at sight of the girl.

For a flustered second, Rhoda was conscious of her hanging braids and negligée, then shuffling a few steps forward looked up at him. "I am Mr. Waler's daughter," she said a little nervously. "I think my father must be asleep."

"My name's Goring," he answered. "I did not expect to find a memsahib here," he frowned anxiously.

"No, I just came," said Rhoda. "I'll go find my father."

She went into the living-room of the bungalow; across the old card-table Waler lay sprawled, an empty whiskey bottle beside him, a broken glass on the floor at his feet.

"Father, father," cried the girl, "wake up, dear. The soldiers have come." She tried to shake him with her cold little hands, but she could not stir his limp weight. Quick, mortified tears filled her eyes. He was drunk—her father! No one must know; she would go out and tell this stranger that he was sick and could not see him.

She moved slowly back to where Goring stood waiting. His broad shoulders and muscular bulk seemed to tower above her.

"Father is not well," she said with trembling lips. "I am afraid he cannot see you."

"That is too bad," he answered quietly. "Is he very ill? It is rather important that I have a few words with him."

Something kind in his voice, the gentleness in his keen eyes behind his glasses, broke down the bitterness of

Rhoda's pride. She was alone—so desperately alone. "Come," she said, beckoning him into the bungalow, "he's here."

There was something tremendously pathetic to Goring about this slight bit of a girl standing before him, her head tilted high and the tears running down her cheeks. He bent over the prostrate man for a moment.

"I'll just take him off to bed, Miss Waler," he said, feigning a cheerfulness of manner he was far from feeling. "I know the way. I've been here before." He picked Waler up in his strong arms and carried him into the next room.

In a moment or two he was back again. "He'll be quite all right in the morning," he said, dropping the *purdah* behind him, "but it is most awkward. I am afraid I shall have to leave you in command here, Miss Waler."

"Yes," said Rhoda. His very presence soothed and comforted her, his clever, kindly face gave her strength and courage.

"I'm an I. C. S. man—that means," he explained, "Indian civil service. I am on my way now to try and settle this unrest among these natives, before they do any more damage. Heckers has quite lost touch with affairs, but there's a Bengallee *babu* at the bottom of this; there always is when there's any trouble in India." He paused a moment to run a firm hand over his brown hair; then his quick, decisive voice went on, "If Waler hadn't been pretty certain of a disturbance here, he'd have been the last man to have wired for help. I shall leave six of my Gurkas down in the village and four up here to guard the bungalow; it is absolutely every man I have to spare. Usually when these jungles know there are troops about they do not come; however, I believe you will be safe till you can get away on tomorrow's noon train. San-

tals don't generally travel in the dark."

Rhoda's wide blue eyes met his bravely.

"Now, Miss Waler, I must go. I am obliged to get to Peripadar tonight," he spoke almost reluctantly.

"Oh, you're going away?" cried the girl, her courage suddenly ebbing.

"I only wish I could stay," he said gravely. "I do not relish the idea of leaving a white woman here with really no protection. You can trust these Gurkas, but this is India. Can you use a gun, Miss Waler?"

"No," said Rhoda with a little shiver.

"It's a wise precaution to have one," said Goring, "though you may not use it." He took a small 32-Colt out of his hip pocket and laid it on the table. "It's loaded—all you do is to point it at whatever you want to hit and pull the trigger."

"It sounds horrible," said the girl. "I'll try to—if I must."

"Good! I'll be much easier in my mind now about leaving you; if there should be any trouble or you be in any danger, I shall leave my *chiprosee* here. He will carry any message you may wish to send me—and remember I shall be only three miles away at the Peripadar bungalow. And now good-bye and good luck, Miss Waler."

He turned slowly on his heel to leave her. The girl watched him go with despairing reluctance—he seemed her one hope and refuge—he looked so big and strong and able to do things. She noted his khaki shirt unbuttoned at the throat, the firm line of the jaw, the shrewd, clever brown eyes behind his glasses. It was very weak of her, but she did so wish that he did not have to go and leave her.

Goring stopped on the threshold, seemingly as anxious to stay as she was to have him. The girl made an appeal-

ing picture in her dark blue kimono, her fair hair smoothed back from her forehead in sleep-tossed little curls.

"Remember, if you need me, I'm not very far away," he said, coming back toward her and holding out his hand. "I am very glad to have met you, Miss Waler."

Rhoda's cold little fingers slipped into his warm clasp. "Good-bye, Mr. Goring," she said in a low voice.

Goring was suddenly conscious of the absurdity of these formalities. He knew with absolute certainty that he would not be able to shake off the spell of this girl's troubled blue eyes. It was not easy to go away and leave her—she was so young, so helpless, so sweetly pretty, and the first white woman he had seen in weeks. Then a stern sense of duty crushed down the vain dreams the sight of Rhoda had awakened. Women could have no place in his life; he was a wanderer, an adventurer—a man who drifted into wild places and did reckless things. It would be different were there any immediate hopes of his being made a Political Agent; then there would be a pucca home and position for his wife, now there was nothing to it but for him to say good-bye and try to forget her.

"Promise me," he said, compromising with his own anxiety, "that you will not remain here after tomorrow."

"Why do you all want me to go away from here?" she cried, fighting back her tears. "My father is the only person I have to care for in all the world; I have come so far to be with him. It seems cruel that you won't let me stay."

For one wild moment Goring longed to snatch her up in his arms and carry her off with him, away from her drunken and depraved father, out of this house of danger and shame.

"There are many reasons why you should not be here," he said sternly.

"The jungly trouble is not the only one. Please believe me, I am not intruding, but mean it for your good."

"I am sure you do," said Rhoda hopelessly, "but you are troubling yourself too much about me."

"We few white people in India," he answered, "are bound together by a bond of brotherhood closer than you can realize. And a girl like you coming here, so sweet and fresh, is something very rare and precious—we must guard you most tenderly."

There was something so fine, so gentle in the tone that Rhoda gazed at him, admiration kindling in her eyes. Here was a man a woman could look up to and adore.

Perhaps he read the thoughts reflected on her expressive little face for something of her own emotion leaped within him.

How fine she was and how game—what a plucky little fighter she was! The impulse to gather her slender body in his arms and dry her tears with kisses nearly mastered Goring. He pulled himself together with an effort; this was neither the time nor the place to add to her problems.

"Good-bye again, Miss Waler," he said. "I hope to see you some time soon in Tashi."

"Good-bye and thank you," Rhoda said faintly and watched him as he went out of the bungalow and the screen door banged behind him.

Then she threw herself into a chair by the table and sobbed bitterly. His coming and going away had left her more alone and desolate than ever. Suddenly her fingers fell on something cold and hard; she started shudderingly and looking down saw she had touched the revolver Goring had given her. For a full moment she stared at it fearfully and then unaccountably caught it up and pressing it to her lips, kissed it passionately.

V

A GROAN from her father's room brought the thought of him sharply and reproachfully to her mind. He was ill. She must go to him.

The chill midnight damp seemed to creep into her bones as she went into his room. Lying on an iron cot under the punkah was her father; his eyes were closed but his lips were mumbling curses. Beside him stood a charpoy or native bed of rough wood and woven twine.

In the dim light of an oil wall-lamp Rhoda saw only her father's drawn face, his twitching hands, his huddled limbs. She hurried to his side, bending tenderly over him, moved to love and overwhelming pity for him. She reached out and as her hand lay lightly on his forehead she was sharply aware of the jingle of bangles and a squatting native woman rose from the other side of the cot and faced Rhoda.

She was still young and her black eyes glowed boldly in her dark face. A pink silk sari had half-fallen back from her oily, straight hair; a dozen silver rings rimmed the lobes of her ears, a heavy gold ornament hung on her breast, her arms were covered with bangles and her lips crimson with the smear of betel nut.

For a moment Rhoda looked at her breathless, then the full, degrading significance of this woman's presence at her father's side broke upon her—this black and shameless creature standing in her dead mother's place. A cold rage possessed her—she pointed to the door with a trembling hand.

"Go," she said in a low tone.

The woman looked at her with sullen defiance but made no move to leave the room.

"I told you to go," Rhoda repeated.

Her voice or the touch of her hand roused the man on the bed. He opened

his bloodshot eyes wearily, then the agony in his daughter's white and pitiful face seemed to rouse him. He turned fiercely on the native woman.

"Jao!" he cried hoarsely. "Jao!" and burst into a torrent of Hindustani curses.

The woman slinked back a pace along the wall, her vicious, evil eyes fixed on the girl, her lips muttering threats.

"Jao!" shouted Waler, sitting up in bed. His clenched fist raised, he struck out at the woman; she shrank cowering before the blow, then lifting her arms above her head gave a shrill, terrible cry and glided out of the room.

Rhoda clung to the side of the cot, trembling.

"I married her," Waler moaned, sinking back on the pillow, "God knows why, but a man goes mad out here alone. She's ruined me, dragged me down till my own kind shrink from me. It's what has kept me all these years down in this hole, shunted off on to a siding." He clutched the girl's hand, his ravaged, haggard face taking on a look of animal cunning. "Come closer," he whispered; "she's always spying and listening—I'm afraid of her. You don't know what these people are. God! Oh, God! She gives me hemp to keep me in her power; it steals away the brains—steals them away. But I can't get rid of her; it's terrible, isn't it, Rhoda?" he groaned, hiding his face in his shaking hands, then drew the girl still closer. "Be careful," he breathed; "watch your every move. Don't eat or drink anything the bawarchi himself does not bring you. She'll have it in for you now; she'll kill you if she can—she's afraid you'll take me away from her. Thank God by tomorrow you'll be gone."

"And you, father!" cried the girl, flinging herself on her knees beside him. "You are coming away, too. You're coming back home with me, away from

this horrible place; you'll come, father, dear—won't you? I'll make you happy—so happy."

"No," he said, shaking his gray head sorrowfully, "it's too late—too late. It's got me—the fever and booze and the dope—I'm not fifty, but I am an old and broken man. It's too late."

"It's never too late, father, dear," cried the girl.

"I told you it had got me," he answered impatiently. "I can't last long and if it won't be that way these jungles have had it in for me for years. A poisoned arrow'll do for me one day—the sooner, the better." He sighed heavily. Then roused himself again. "Goring and the troops," he snapped. "They haven't come—damn him if he doesn't get here on time."

"Mr. Goring has been here," said Rhoda. "He has left six Gurkas in the village and four to guard the bungalow. He has gone on to Peripadar."

"Thank God!" muttered Waler, "you'll be all right now; but watch Rani—they're treacherous as snakes." His eyes drooped wearily. "I'm tired—tired—I think I shall sleep." He rolled on his side and through tear-blinded eyes the girl saw that he was again asleep.

She tried kneeling on the cold concrete floor to pray. For a long time she crouched, murmuring incoherent and passionate appeals to God to save her father, lying before her, body and brain wrecked by sin and disease. She would again beg him, implore him to come away with her—he would be unable to resist her, and then together they should leave this strangely beautiful yet terrible country.

Out through the window she saw the stars, shining above the darkness of the mango tree—it seemed somehow a symbol of hope and happiness.

Her thoughts drifted to Goring riding out under those stars into danger. His

name fell softly from her lips in a half-unspoken prayer and she wondered if she would ever see him again. Suddenly she began to shiver; she rose swiftly to her feet; she must go back to bed or she would get fever and be ill.

Stooping over her father, she gently smoothed his rumpled pillow and kissed his forehead; then went silently out of the room.

On the card-table Goring's revolver was still lying. Perhaps if she put it under her pillow she might have sweet dreams. She picked it up firmly, smiling a little at her own courage, and pushing aside the purdah started to go into her room.

VI

A SLIGHT, breathless noise behind her and the muffled jingle of a bracelet startled her. She wheeled about and just in time to escape the upraised knife in the clenched brown fist of Rani, the native woman.

The girl gave a sharp cry and backing against the wall faced the woman with horror-stricken eyes. Rani's bosom beneath the pink sari heaved tumultuously, her face was a livid mask of writhing passion, her eyes blazed with hate and a merciless revenge.

Rhoda knew she was face to face with a treacherous death; she tried to scream out, but her voice choked in her throat. The woman glided closer, her breath coming pantingly through her crimson blotched lips; then she gathered herself leopard like for a spring.

Rhoda's fingers with subconscious instinct tightened on the gun she held in her hand. She raised it unsteadily, "Don't," she whispered, "or I shall shoot."

The maddened native woman leapt upon her—Rhoda pulled the trigger, dizzily aware of a stabbing pain in her arm. There was the report of the gun

and then through the lifting smoke the girl saw Rani fleeing from the room.

Rhoda's brain was reeling. She staggered against the wall, the gun fell from her rigid, nerveless fingers and when she raised her hand to the burning pain in her arm, she took it away red with dripping blood.

For a moment, she fought for her self control. How still it was! Why had no one come at the report of the gun; it had not even wakened her father. How fearfully silent the night was! Then she remembered her arm, she must wash it out and bind up the wound; she must call the boy to have him bring her some warm water. The punkah walla or the chokidar must hear her.

She raised her voice calling for the boy, but no one came to her.

She sank into a chair and bunching the folds of her kimona against her bleeding arm, sobbed forlornly.

She heard her name called from the doorway and looking up saw Das, the Bengalee.

"Can I be of any assistance, Miss Waler?" he inquired, coming toward her.

Rhoda stared at him, bewildered. How had he come there? Had he heard the shot?

"I was just on my way to warn you; you must leave here immediately," he said, answering her unspoken question; then noting her pallor and the blood-stained kimona, he bent over her. "You have been wounded, hurt," he cried sharply. "I said you were not to be injured," he broke off abruptly, under his breath.

"Please send one of the servants for the doctor," said Rhoda weakly.

"Your servants have all run away, Miss Waler—and the doctor as well; the village is entirely deserted. You had better let me help you bind up your arm and then come, too."

He moved into the dining room, taking a napkin from the drawer of the dinner wagon and filling a finger bowl with water from the filter; then he came back to the girl and pulling back the sleeve of her kimona, bathed the ugly, gaping cut.

"It's only a flesh wound," he said, working with almost frenzied haste.

Rhoda was too dizzy to make the slightest resistance, but his touch filled her with antagonism. He bound up her arm with his handkerchief. "There is not a moment to be lost, Miss Waler," he said, "the junglies are coming—they will be here, perhaps, within an hour. You must not remain here."

His excited manner left Rhoda contemptuously cool. "I could not think of leaving my father," she answered, "he is ill."

"You do not realize," Das cried, "thousands of them will pour in by dawn. Even I can not say to what extremes they will go; they get drunk and there is no controlling them." His eyes glazed with fear, "they burn, kill, destroy most horribly. They have sworn vengeance on your father—and you are his daughter."

"My father must go also, then," said Rhoda.

"Thousands of them," Das raved on, "moving silently as the tiger through the jungle. Come, there is not a minute to waste—I alone can save you, they will not harm me. Come!"

He laid his hand eagerly on the girl's arm.

"No," she cried, flinging off his hold. Her thoughts flew to Goring. "There are Gurkas here, we shall not be hurt."

"Gurkas," he sneered, "six against six thousand. Do you think they are so mad as to face certain death? They have heard and seen what happened to the police at Peripadar; they, too, will flee and leave you."

"They will not do that," Rhoda said

resolutely, keeping Goring's words in mind, though despite herself her hopes were sinking. Suppose these men should prove faithless, what would become of her and her father?

"Come with me," the Bengalee pleaded, "and I promise you your father shall not be harmed. If you refuse me, his throat shall be slit and this bungalow razed to the ground." His voice and eyes were ugly with passion.

"You can not frighten me," said Rhoda, the blood of her fighting forefathers stirring in her veins. "We shall not be harmed and I shall not go with you."

"You shall," he cried; "you shall come with me and be mine—mine. Even as your father married one of us so shall you marry me, my beautiful."

"Leave this house," said the girl, rising unsteadily to her feet.

For answer he seized her in his arms, forcing back her head until the cords stood out in her slender throat. In the struggle to free herself the flimsy kimono was torn open and she could feel his eyes revelling in her white shoulders and arms.

"Let me go," she panted. She was weak and dizzy from loss of blood; she swayed in his rough grasp; she felt his passionate kisses burning on her lips.

A physical revulsion seized the girl. With one desperate effort she shoved his gloating face from her own and screamed with every ounce of her remaining strength. The shrill, piercing note reached the drug befuddled senses of the man on the bed in the next room; he stirred uneasily, puzzling over what had awakened him.

"My queen, my jewel!" cried the Bengalee. He forced the girl toward the door with him, her slight body crushed in his arms.

"Father, father," sobbed the girl; "oh, my God!"

S.—May—2

The low, despairing cry roused Waler. He stumbled to his feet, trying to place the terrible sound; his shaking hand groped toward his dull, aching head. Then suddenly he remembered Rhoda—it was her voice he had heard, a woman's scream of terror. He sprang toward the door, tearing down the purdah.

For a second he stood, a wild and disheveled figure, the bloodshot eyes glaring in his ghastly, haggard face; then the wasted, ruined manhood within him, roused and redeemed, he flung himself on Das, crashing into his face with his great clenched fist and shouting curses at him.

"Take your hands off my daughter or I'll brain you," he yelled, "you dirty nigger, you." His hands clutched the Bengalee's throat; for a moment they swayed, locked like two jungle beasts. Then the color in Das' face slowly thickened and darkened; he let slip his hold of the girl, his tongue protruded, his blackening lips tried to plead for mercy.

"Father," cried Rhoda, "do not kill him." She caught hold of his arm, trying to loosen his grip.

"Death's too good for him," panted Waler, and catching the Bengalee under the jaw, flung him heavily to the floor. He lay there stunned and bleeding.

"We must not stay here," cried the girl breathlessly, "the natives are coming. He said they would be here in an hour—and kill you."

"I'll not run from a cowardly pack of swine," cried Waler violently, "my gun will send a hundred flying; I'll pot them as they come." He laughed wildly then turned sharply to the girl, "this is no place for a woman, Rhoda, you must go. They're ugly brutes," he kicked the Bengalee lying at his feet. Once again the old energy animated him; he shook the grizzled hair out of

his eyes and wiped his sweat-beaded forehead.

"Goring left some Gurkas here, you say—four to guard the bungalow. My God, I've been dreaming of the fight we'd have, those little chaps and me against the junglies—but you must take them, they'll guard you till you get to Goring. He'll see you safe into Tashi; I'll wire Mrs. Townsend you're coming; she'll be good to you. Now go hurry and dress yourself. You'll have to ride my pony—there's nothing but a kutchra road. You'll find an old riding habit in the bottom of the almirah in your room. Put it on—it was your mother's."

He half shoved the girl toward the door. She clung to him.

"Father, you will come, too," she pleaded. "You are sending me away with your only means of protection. You'll be here all alone."

"Nonsense," he said, "they'll steer clear enough of the bungalow when they know Sam Waler's inside with his pop gun. Go now, I'll be easier in my mind when you're out of this cursed hole and if I'm here they'll not follow you."

Rhoda felt the purdah drop behind her. In the bottom of the almirah she found the old riding habit, moth-eaten and faded. She slipped into it with trembling hands, then picking up the bag she had scarcely unpacked, hurried back to her father.

He was just leading up a gray Bhutia pony in front of the bungalow. His gaunt face was drawn with anxiety.

"Gawan wasn't there, though I'd swear I saw that confounded syce skulking behind the well," he muttered. At sight of Rhoda an almost tender line curved his thin lips.

"You've brought your mother back to me," he said slowly "I thought I'd forgotten her years ago."

"Father, dear," the girl said solemnly, "promise me you will come away

with me when this trouble is over. Promise me you'll come home."

He lifted her into the saddle. "Yes," he answered, "if it comes out all right, I'll go home."

She leaned toward him; for a moment her soft cheek lay against his. Then he led her along the garden path through the compound.

"Hold on tight and go slow," he said. "Don't be nervous."

At the rickety gate a little Gurka sergeant advanced smartly to the salute. Waler gave his orders crisply.

"Achcha sabi," the Gurka replied, his beady Chinese eyes snapping.

"And if harm comes to the mem-sahib," Waler ended, "Goring sahib will have the life of each and every one of you. Go now and go swiftly."

The Gurka saluted, clicked his heels and shouted for his men. They came silently, little brown men in khaki; they formed themselves into a bodyguard, two on each side of Rhoda's horse.

"Good-bye, my girl," said Waler. "God bless you," and he looked away toward the lifting gray behind the hills in the east.

Sobs choked Rhoda. She felt the pony being led away and looking back through her tears, tried in vain to wave a last good-bye to the lank, wasted figure watching her go under the fading stars.

For a long while Waler stood looking after the girl until the curve of the nullah shut her from sight. He sighed heavily—she would be safe; the jungle would hide her, the Gurkas protect her, Goring see her safely to Tashi. How like her mother she was with her blue eyes and pale gold hair—she brought back to him the blue skies of Massachusetts and the sea breeze, stirring the lilacs and apple blossoms in Spring.

Perhaps she was right and it was not too late after all; she would lead him back to the old life. The light of

the coming day fell softly on the thin face from which all the harshness had vanished.

"Dawn is here," thought Waler, "the junglies will be coming." He turned quickly on his heel to go back to the bungalow for his gun.

A swish in the grass, the snap of a twig, the flash of a dark body from behind the wide trunk of a mawa tree, then the whirl of a poisoned arrow speeding through the dawn pierced Waler to the heart.

"Damn," he snarled, falling heavily against the rickety gate as noiselessly through the thick jungle Gawan, the syce, his wrongs avenged, fled to lose himself among the hordes of advancing Santals.

VII

RHODA WALER clung desperately on to the little Bhutia pony. She had never ridden before and the trail was rough and uncertain.

Black spots began to dance before Rhoda's eyes—she felt a desperate desire to slip to the ground. A sinking faintness overcame her; half lying on the Bhutia's back she felt herself carried along. Pains shot down her neck and back, her forehead burned, her throat was parched and dry.

Far ahead the noisy quarreling of thousands of ravens hovering like an inky cloud over the Peripadar with its dead cattle and scattered stores, roused the girl. Then she noticed that her pony had stopped in front of a large mud hut, the roof heavily thatched with dried rice grass, the tiny windows barred, iron bolts clanking on the door. A huge elephant chained to the trunk of a sal tree, swayed restlessly.

"Dak bungalow hie, memsahib," the little Gurka said, saluting.

Rhoda tried to climb to the ground. Everything swam before her, but she

was sharply aware of the figure of a man in khaki hurrying toward her. She raised her heavy, smarting eyes, trying to call out his name; then she slid from the saddle to be caught in Goring's strong arms.

"Miss Waler!" he cried, holding her tenderly as he carried her into the bungalow.

It was bare inside except for Goring's camp furniture. He laid her on the canvas cot; she was limp and utterly exhausted and her small white face was pinched with pain.

Goring raised her hand gently, pouring some water through her pale lips. It revived her a little; she looked up at him gratefully.

"Father made me come," she said faintly, "he said 'it wasn't safe there.' Oh, it's all been horrible, horrible!"

"Try not to remember any thing but that you're safe here with me," said Goring. Though he tried to speak cheerfully, his jaw was grim with anxiety; he looked down at the girl as she lay there, her eyes too big and too bright and the crimson of high fever staining her cheeks. Her frail loveliness stirred him to the depths of his being. How sweet she was! His to guard and cherish for the hour at least.

"My father is coming away with me," she began rapidly, "how hot it is—I am burning. How the sun glares and the bats beat against the screen. She is going to kill me—save me, save me!" She flung herself wildly into Goring's arms, clinging to his breast and raving deliriously. "He wants to take me away with him—that native, but I will not go." She sprang up from the cot shivering from head to foot and only Goring's firm hold stopped her from tearing out again into the noon-day heat.

"Listen, little girl," he said, "you must lie still. You don't want to be sick, do you?"

"Don't let him take me," she panted, "he wants to marry me, but you won't let him, will you?" Her little hands gripped his shirt violently, the muscles of her delicate face twitching.

"No one shall take you—no one shall hurt you," Goring said quietly, putting his arms about her.

His voice soothed the girl. She lay down again on the cot and drank the medicine he mixed for her from his leather case.

"Punkah kars," said Goring. The hot air wafted above the girl's face, stirring the tendrils of her fair hair; her two burning little palms clasped his hand. Once again the man fought back the wild desire to gather her in his arms, to keep her forever. He glanced bitterly around at the kutchah mud walls and floor. What sort of a place was this for a woman. It might be years before he became a Political Agent and this life was not one to ask a girl to share. No—he must let her go and he must not see her any more, lest the very sweetness of her weaken his resolution.

Outside the wind whirled a mad eddy of dried leaves high in the air, the bamboos swayed tipsily. Behind the hills the thunder pounded, the lightning tore forkedly through the sky, great clouds rolled heavily black with the coming rain; then with a roar like the rattle of musketry the monsoon came, beating on the thatch and in a few moments turning the trail into a rushing, muddy stream. Above the clamor of the storm Goring heard a man's shout and through the open dor saw the chiprossie he had left at Barampadar running unsteadily toward him.

"Sahib, Sahib Hazur," the man cried. He fell across the threshold salaaming Goring. The little Gurka sergeant and his handful of men gathered outside; the chiprossie's words tumbled out confusedly, his face fearful with horror.

"The jungles had gone to Baram-

padar," he said in Hindustani, "they had burnt the company cooly lines, they had sacked the babu quarters, had robbed the bazaar. In the office they had broken open the safe and stolen 800 rupees; the Parsee contractor had fled into the jungle, but Waler Sahib had been killed, found dead with an arrow in his heart and no one to say who had done the deed. Oh, Protector of the Poor, great will be the vengeance the Sahiblog will take upon the Santals. Fifty of their villages shall be burnt and their crops destroyed; so one of the Tesseldars had told them, bidding them hasten back to their homes, but Das babu still drives them on. The Gurkas fight sahib until every man falls dead hacked by little axes, but I, the faithful servant of my lord, hasten here to warn him the Bengalee sends them here to seize the memsahib. Much liquor has he given them and told them the memsahib is the evil spirit who has brought upon them all these misfortunes. It is not wise for the lord of my father to remain here."

Goring listened, his brows knit, his face hard and grim. The girl beside him tried to follow what was being said; she heard her father's name, but though she could not understand intuitively she knew that whatever word had come was not good.

"My father, what does he say of him?" she whispered to Goring.

He turned away for a moment. Unstrung and ill as she was, now was not the time to tell her how Waler had died.

"Do not be anxious," he answered gently.

"Maharaj—sahib—Hazur," the chiprossie rolled at Goring's feet, kissing the ground before him, "the lord of my father will listen to the word of his poor servant. Thousands are coming, women and children as well. From behind the trees they will slay us all; it is not well for the sahib to stay."

Goring bit his lip. It was against his every instinct to run away from danger; he wanted to stay and face the junglies even as Waler had done. His word had always borne weight with these people. He liked them—they were a splendid, virile race until corrupted and tampered with. Now a Bengalee babu was urging them on to further mischief to gain his own ends. The girl! Goring was able to piece together the entire story.

He must take no chances in getting her to safety. If any thing were to happen to him in a fight in the heart of the jungle, what would become of Rhoda?

Goring stood up abruptly. While it was raining the junglies would not move. The elephant must be loaded and they start at once; he gave his orders quickly—the girl must be gotten safely to Tashi before he returned to settle his accounts with the Santals.

With wonderful rapidity the little camp dissolved about them and great loads were slung over the back of the elephant. The mahout ran nimbly up the trunk squatting in front of the dirty pad and the mighty beast plodded off, its little beady black eyes gleaming wickedly.

"Miss Waler," Goring said, stooping over Rhoda, "it is most regrettable but we have to move along. It will not be very far, though; we will cut across the river and get the train just beyond it. I am only concerned if you will be able to stand the trip," he regarded her anxiously, his shrewd brown eyes on her face.

"I can go," she answered bravely.

He helped her to her feet, wrapping his raincoat around her; she was quite lost in its bulky voluminousness. "You're a brave girl," he said admiringly as they went toward the door.

"I'm a bit wobbly," she said, smiling up at him.

His horse and the Bhutia she had ridden were waiting in the downpour of drenching rain.

At sight of the pony Rhoda shrank back.

"Oh, I can't ride," she said, "I ache so and I've never ridden before; I'd surely fall off this time."

"I shall take you on my horse," he said, "I'll be very careful of you if you will only hold on to me good and tight." He lifted her into the saddle, springing on behind her and gathering her close into his arms.

The rain beat down upon them with the force of many little blows; he pulled the raincoat over her and nestled her closer to him.

"Are you comfortable?" he asked with a slight grin as they started off.

"Very," she whispered feeling strangely, wondrously at peace. She was not afraid with him holding her; a sense almost of happiness stole over her as she caught glimpses of Goring, his khaki shirt soaked and clinging close to his splendid body, his face under his dripping tophee, stern and yet so kind.

And the man feeling the gentle pressure of the girl against his breast, smiled as he thought of how he had wanted to carry her away with him on his horse and how his wish was being so strangely and miraculously fulfilled.

VIII

Torrents of muddy water tore by them, the nullahs seethed and overflowed. Golu, the elephant, plodded heavily along, feeling his way cautiously with a great front paw where the rain had dislodged the banks or loosened some treacherous stone. Now and again he wrenched a branch out of his way, or uprooted a young tree to clear a path for himself.

Goring's horse stumbled along under

the double burden and as the river of crocodiles came into sight beyond the green of the jungle, the man suddenly wished that this ride would not end so soon—that it might go on forever.

He looked down at the girl; her damp light hair lay against his breast. He could see the soft curve of her cheek, the pluck of her little ear, the parted line of her mouth. The sweetness of her was irresistible, the moment was his. Goring bent over and kissed her on the lips.

Then he leaned closer to see if she were angry, but only a deepening of the color in her fever-flushed face betrayed anything to him, for she dropped her eyes so that he should not see the gladness in their blue depths.

A great joy stirred the man. She was not the kind of a girl who would unprotestingly let him kiss her unless she cared a little. The wonder of it filled his heart—he gathered her closer to him, something fiercely protective in his clasp. She was his to guard and defend through these golden moments, which when she had gone again as she must go, would be the one real memory of his life.

So they went on oblivious of everything but each other and the new-found glory of their love. The girl quivering and radiant despite the pain that racked her body, the man's heart big with passion and heavy with despair because he knew he must lose her so very soon.

It tied his tongue. Honor forbade him to tell her that he loved her—to win from her a shy confession that she too cared. His country needed him; some of her sons she sent to the field of battle, others she kept back to guard the outposts of her Empire. Now was not the time to quit or shirk with the Motherland fighting for her very existence. Heckers was good for twenty years and Political agencies are not to be had every day in the I. C. S.

So while Rhoda's thoughts drifted happily, the man's crashed from dreams of what might have been, to the harshest of realities. In less than an hour he must bid her good-bye, for months, perhaps never to see her again. There was no dodging the issue—he must not even win from her a promise not to forget. Her young life should not be ruined waiting for him. No—he must let her go, not knowing how much he cared nor how hard it was to give her up. He must make their parting as commonplace as possible.

It was the little Gurka sergeant who brought Goring sharply back to present facts.

"Sahib," he cried, his yellow face wrinkled with alarm, "junglies hie," he pointed to a bael tree from whose branches one of his men was just scrambling down.

Goring peered back through the blur of rain. In the distance, half hidden by a low hillock, he made out a dark moving mass.

"We've got to make the river," he said grimly, spurring on his flagging horse. The great elephant as if sensing danger, quickened his pace.

The Muggerudder or river of crocodiles had overflowed its banks as the Indian rivers do in the monsoon. The low lying paddy fields lay deep under water, the wreckage of some jungle huts floated past. The surging rush of waters reached them as they came out along the inundated shore. Goring's horse splashed through the eddying mud a foot deep; it reared on its haunches quivering with fear and refusing to go further.

The man's face grew gray with anxiety. He tried in vain to spur on his beast, yet knowing that it was useless—the river was too deep to be forded. For a moment he sat, the girl clutched desperately against his heart.

At all costs she must get across;

this was no place for her. If there was to be a fight and he should go under, what would become of her? Once on the other side of the river he and his men could hold back the jungles until she had reached the railway station; but how to get her across that turbid, treacherous stream?

Then insistently from behind them a noise rose gradually above the patter of the rain and the rush of the river, an ominous, terrifying noise, murmurous and swelling into a bedlam of drunken yells and shouts. Goring turned in his saddle and saw a man in a white tophee on horseback, leading on a mob of hundreds of black Santalis.

"It's Das," whispered Rhoda clutching his arm. She leaned closer, "Listen," she breathed, "he's after me; if you put me down he will go away and not harm you. If you don't—you'll be killed." A sob choked her.

For answer Goring dismounted and lifted her from the saddle. The water swished about them as he put her behind the shelter of a bit of bush; then he pulled out his automatic.

"I'll leave a last shot in it for you," he said and placed himself in front of her. He turned to his men giving his orders sharply.

The Gurkas knelt waist deep in water, their black eyes agleam with the lust of battle, their rifles leveled.

"Crouch low as you can," Goring said to the girl as an arrow whirred through the air above his head.

"Fire!" he snapped and the Gurkas' rifles flashed.

A half dozen black bodies in the jungle beyond fell heavily on their faces. There was the rush of retreat; then the skulking dark forms creeping up closer to shoot from behind the shelter of the trees.

"I must get her across," Goring muttered, the sweat of agony standing out on his forehead. If she were to be

hurt! If one of those deadly arrows were to strike her—or their ammunition gone and his little party annihilated, what worse fate might not befall her?

Suddenly his eye fell on Golu, the elephant, thrashing his trunk impatiently, his wicked little eyes almost uncanny with intelligence.

"By Jove," cried Goring, "he'll do it. Cut," he cried, to the little Gurka as he tugged at the ropes that bound the packs of the great beast's sides. A half dozen kukris flashed out hacking at the hempen cords and freeing the elephant of its load.

"Hathi jaiga!" Goring cried, pointing across the river. Golu knelt down at the mahout's word.

"You must cross on the elephant," Goring said rapidly to girl. "You'll be safe, I'll send two of my men with you."

"Don't make me go," pleaded Rhoda. "I am not afraid. Let me stay with you."

"For my sake, go," he panted, lifting her high in his arms for his men to help on to the great beast's back. She cowered a moment in the twisted roll of sacking, looking down at his drawn face.

"If anything should happen to you," she breathed, her hands clutched together.

"God bless and protect you," he answered, as the elephant rose to its feet and prodded by the mahout's steel-shafted goad, plunged toward the river, snorting angrily.

Rhoda looked around, with tear wet eyes. "I love you, I love you," she murmured, looking back at the man who was going to fight, perhaps to die for her. Incoherent prayers poured from her white lips as she heard the harsh bark of the rifles behind her.

She could see the Gurkas crouched low behind the meager shelter of the sparse underbrush and the black forms of the jungles maddened by her pos-

sible escape pouring down to the river bank.

She clung desperately to the swaying pad as the muddy waters deepened about them and she thought they must surely be swept off and drowned. The great beast sensing his peril reared his trunk, trumpeting with rage, and plunged on, rearing himself from the flood and half swimming, struggled on till he secured a slippery foothold on the opposite bank.

Above the roaring in her ears Rhoda could hear the crack of the rifles now growing less frequent, and then her terrified eyes saw a dugout hauled from a cove up stream and launched, four natives standing in it and paddling vigorously toward her.

She covered her face. From the patch of scrub where she knew Goring was, flashed three shots; two of the Santals fell into the bottom of the canoe, one toppled heavily and the last sprang into the water with a yell, swimming back for the shore. The unguided canoe whirled about and started swiftly down stream.

On the shore the last of the brave Gurkas fell, pierced in the back by an arrow. Goring emptied his automatic at the jungle that had killed his little sergeant. That death faced him was as nothing to the fact that they would recover the dugout and cross again after Rhoda.

Out on the stream the canoe glided past. A wild impulse seized the man. Flinging aside his gun he ran toward the river, plunging into the water and swimming after the canoe.

He looked once and saw the tiny figure of the girl vanishing in the blur of the distance. It gave him hope and strength—he struggled on against the swiftness of the current. The dugout was his only chance as well as hers now. He gained rapidly on it until the splash of waters behind him warned him of

peril; looking over his shoulder, he saw swimming after him Das the Bengalee, his face livid with passion, a knife between his gleaming teeth.

For a moment despair seized Goring—exhausted and unarmed, he took hold of the side of the drifting boat and looked to where he knew the girl now was safe.

Behind him the Bengalee gained; to let him get the dugout meant Rhoda's doom. He saw the gleam of the knife upraised in the babu's hand—his own right arm shot out to stay the blow which never came.

The hate on the Bengalee's face turned to horror; the knife dropped; a gurgling shriek bubbled up from below—a dark form cut the stream. Half-maddened with fear, Goring hauled himself into the boat. On the muddy water a red blotch swirled above the spot where Das had been dragged under. The Muggerudder had not belied its name.

Howls of terror rose from the shore where the Santals, demoralized by the wrath of the demon of the river, fled back to their jungles, not even stopping to despoil the dead.

Picking up a blood-stained paddle from the bottom of the canoe, Goring made his way slowly to the opposite bank.

IX

A PRETTY bit of compound lay about the station platform where Golu the elephant, his massive sides caked with mud, stopped. Roses and crêpe myrtle, hibiscus and almander stood dripping with rain. A tub of gardenias filled the air with perfume, gay-colored Indian pinks bordered the geometrically laid-out flower-beds.

A thick mist like drizzle filled the air. The usual crowd of idlers huddled together squatting—a beggar with the hid-

eous stump of an amputated limb whined monotonously, holding out his brass bowl for alms—a low-caste Mohammedan woman in tight-fitting red print trousers stood smoking a brown cigarette; a box walla or travelling merchant, carrying his umbrella, approached, followed by three cooly women bearing steel trunks and huge bundles balanced on their heads; a Hindu bride of about eight passed, garlanded, newly nose-ringed and wearing a mustard-yellow sari.

But Rhoda noted nothing. She sat down in the chair the station babu brought her, thinking, praying for but one thing—that Goring might come to her—that he might have been spared to return to her.

When at last she saw him coming toward her, a cry sprang to her lips. She ran eagerly toward him, her hands outstretched, her eyes wide with thankfulness.

"Oh, I am so glad—you're here safe!" she sobbed in half-hysterical relief.

He clasped her hand in his, soothing her as he might have hushed a bewildered child, and only the thin line of his mouth betrayed the strain he had undergone. He led her back to the chair and made her sit down again.

"You are all right, you are not hurt?" cried the girl.

"Yes, I am all right," he answered, and looked away not to see the tenderness in her eyes.

"The train is about due now," he said at last, to break the silence that fell between them; then, as if to stifle the words that trembled on his lips, he added, "You know people in Tashi?"

"No, I know no one; but father told me he would wire a Mrs. Townsend that I was coming."

"Cecile Townsend, well I should say," Goring said, glad of the opportunity to be commonplace. "She's about

the whitest woman in India." Then he frowned—the wire Waler had told her he would send had probably never gone.

"I shall send word to Mrs. Townsend to expect you," he said; "you'll get into Tashi this evening."

"You—you're not coming then?" said Rhoda, trying to keep the keenness of disappointment out of her voice.

"No," he said slowly, "I have my work still to do," and he looked behind him. He moved away abruptly. It was not easy to hear the low tones of her voice and remember only the harshness of duty. "I shall send a message directly," and proceeded to telegraph to Mrs. Townsend; among other facts he asked that the news of her father's death might be broken to Rhoda as soon as she seemed able to bear the shock. With the set face of a man relentlessly forcing himself to do a difficult thing and with a sense of impending loss, he went back to the girl.

She sat, a wistful little figure against the background of gray rain and gay flower-beds. Her body was racked with pain and her heart seemed suddenly dead within her. She could not help but notice that Goring's manner toward her had indefinably changed; he was formal, courteous, but evidently wanted to show her that those hours of stress that had seemed to bind them so wondrously close were over—had meant nothing after all. It puzzled her but hurt her terribly. Had she been too forward, too bold?—she had let him kiss her—and yet it must have been but the kiss a man steals from any pretty girl when circumstances permit. The crimson of mortification darkened her cheeks; she was weak and all in, her pride was gone or he could not have the power to so make her suffer.

"You will be most comfortable with the Townsends," Goring was forcing himself to say. "Their only son has just been sent back from Mesopotamia

pretty badly banged up." He did not know how to continue; every word he uttered was hollow and false, when the mad beating of his heart urged him to pour out to her his inmost thoughts. Suddenly his thoughts drifted back to the dak bungalow outside the ruins of Peripadar and the work in the jungles beyond, that his country called on him to do.

"Perhaps," he said with an effort, "I shall see you shortly in Tashi, Miss Waler."

"I don't know," said Rhoda unsteadily, fighting back her tears. "I shall not stay in India very long; father has promised me to come home."

Goring turned away quickly—her father had promised her to go home—well, he had kept his promise. Poor little girl.

Rhoda looked down the track. A bell rang—the train was coming, she was going away. She had even told him she was leaving India but he had said nothing—he did not care. What a pitiful fool she was to have imagined what did not exist, to have left her over-soft heart drift so irrevocably to a man who would forget her existence almost before she was out of his sight! What a farce it had all been—even the burning shame of the kiss he had given her!

She rose weakly; she felt dizzy and wretchedly ill.

"Good-bye, Mr. Goring," she said, holding out her little hand. "You know I never can thank you enough for all you have done for me. You've—" but she broke off, unable to go on.

"Good-bye," he said hoarsely, but through the stinging tears which blinded the girl, she did not see the look on the man's face.

The locomotive pulled up; the little cars on their spindly-looking wheels came to a stop. Dark faces smeared with ashes and painted with caste

marks stared at the memsahib, whose face was the whitest they had ever seen.

Goring lifted the girl into a first-class compartment and stood at the window below her.

"Perhaps," he said, "you will send me a line sometime telling me how you are getting on."

"I'll send you a picture post-card from Boston," she smiled rather drearily.

The railroad guard with the rabbit's ear flap of pugaree shouted deafeningly, waving a flag; a babel of tongues rose about them. The door of the carriage was slammed shut. She was going away—leaving him forever.

In the anguish of this thought she forgot everything; she leaned toward him, her eyes telling what her lips refused to betray.

"Good-bye," she whispered as the train moved off.

She heard his low good-bye above the rattle of the puffing engine. She looked back at the tall, strong figure in khaki until it blurred into the mists of the distance; she then flung herself on the wide leather seat and sobbed bitterly.

How different this ride was from the trip of hopes and dreams up from Calcutta! Her whole life was changed; from the carefree girl she had become the woman who must suffer. And she would never, never see him again.

The tears smarted on her burning cheeks; the late afternoon shadows grew longer, the train sped roaringly through the flat, gray-shrouded land. Suddenly Rhoda roused herself; the rabbit-eared guard had flung open the door of her compartment and she knew she was in Tashi.

X

RHODA hurriedly dabbed her face and smoothed back her damp, ruffled hair. She was dully aware of her strange ap-

pearance in the shabby, faded riding habit. She jumped out of the train and almost ran into the arms of a large, motherly lady waiting for her.

"I am Mrs. Townsend," she said, "and you are Miss Waler." She took the girl's arm and led her through the station to where a big car stood waiting. She was one of those frowsy English women given to lavender muslins and floppy garden hats; her face was bleached of all color and had that look of premature age life in the tropics gives, but her eyes were wonderfully kind.

"I was at the Gymkhana," she went on, settling the girl in the machine, "but my son opened the wire and telephoned me. I got here just in time to meet you."

"I am afraid I have put you out a great deal," said Rhoda as the Sikh chauffeur touched a hand to his enormous white pugaree and they started.

"I am so glad to have you, my dear," said Mrs. Townsend, her heart warming at the wistful prettiness of the girl beside her. "You see, I have a daughter of my own. She is up at Simla for the rains now, but Larry, my son, Captain Townsend, is with me now." Her face clouded over. "Ah, here we are at home."

Rhoda gave a little smile of pleasure and sank gratefully into a wicker lounge chair her hostess pushed forward.

"You will have a peg, my dear," said Mrs. Townsend, clapping her hands; "it will pull you together and do you good." She gave her orders to the barefoot, turbaned servant who appeared noiselessly. Then she picked up the wire laying on a table beside her and as she read it her face quickened with sympathy. Poor little thing, she had lost her father and did not know it. Sam Waler, whom she remembered as bringing his bride out years ago—the same Sam Waler who had been kicked out of

the Club at Tashi. She looked down thoughtfully at Rhoda; she seemed so frail, so exhausted, she must have a day or two of rest before she should be told.

Rhoda lay back in the chair, her fever-flushed face against the cretonne of the cushions.

"If you will excuse me, dear," said Mrs. Townsend, tucking the telegram into her blouse, "I'll go see that your room is made ready for you. In India we always keep our guest-room beds stripped," and with a gentle smile she left the girl.

Rhoda drank the whiskey and soda with a little grimace of distaste; she hated Scotch, but it would make her feel better and her bones ached so and she was so tired. She wondered how she would ever drag herself out of the big chair or move again; she longed to sleep for hours and hours, but she must not be rude. Mrs. Townsend was being so good, so kind to her, she must exert herself to be bright and friendly in return. Despite herself her eyes drooped wearily. Goring—would she ever see him again, ever hear his voice, look into his eyes again? A wistful little line twisted her lips. Suddenly she started wide awake—a tall man in khaki was coming into the room—Goring!

A low cry caught in her throat—he had come after all. Then as the man moved nearer she saw that it was not Goring but a younger man, and even in one fleeting glance the beauty and tragedy of his eyes struck her.

He walked stiffly, as if in pain, but at sight of the girl stopped abruptly.

"Oh, I say, beg pardon," he said. "I didn't know anyone was here." Then, coming closer, "You are Miss Waler, are you not?"

"Yes," said Rhoda, "and you are Captain Townsend."

"Rum go, that Santal trouble," said the boy, sitting down beside her. "Wish I had a good machine gun squad out

there, I'd clean them up, I can tell you; they and all the rest of these cursed blacks." His voice had all the repression of bitterness in it. "Fine mess the Turks made of me. It would have been better if they'd done for me."

Rhoda turned toward him, her fine face alive with compassion. "I wouldn't say that if I were you," she said softly.

"Never to be good for anything again! They've patched me up, shrapnel and all. The mater doesn't know—thinks I'll be all right again in a little while. No more polo, no tennis—oh, I tell you it's hell to be half dead when your life is only beginning."

He clenched his fists passionately, his handsome, boyish face haggard with agony.

"I think perhaps we all have to suffer," she answered in a low voice.

Townsend glanced at her eagerly. She, too, was very young, but her eyes were deep with understanding. Something in her very frailness disarmed the boy's pride; he resented the world's pity, but this girl—he should not mind if she were to be a little sorry for him.

"Who'd look at a chap like me now?" he demanded harshly. "Not twenty-five yet and the whole thing over—life—work—love. I'm not grouching; I've done my bit, but when I see a girl like you and know no woman will ever care for me now, I just about go mad."

"Don't talk like that," said Rhoda, looking into the boy's appealing face. "I am sure if anyone loved you she'd care all the more because you needed her a little, and she'd remember what you had done and be awfully proud of you."

"Could you feel like that for a man?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes," she answered quietly, "if I cared." And unconsciously her thoughts flew to Goring and her lips curved softly.

Perhaps the boy misinterpreted the

tenderness of her expression, perhaps it was only the words of hope she had spoken to him, but he straightened in his chair, his despondency giving way to a new look of courage.

"What bricks some of you women are!" he said. "You've made me see things altogether differently. By Jove, I'm glad you've come."

Mrs. Townsend, coming into the room, smiled swiftly on Rhoda, her mother heart in her eyes. "You've cheered my boy already," she said, laying a gentle hand on her son's fair hair. "I see, Larry, you know Miss Waler; I am sure you'll be great chums. Now I must carry you off, dear, to get ready for dinner. Then early to bed; Mr. Goring insists that you rest."

"Damn Goring!" said the Captain as Rhoda left the room.

XI

"I SHALL send you my ayah," said Mrs. Townsend as she switched on the dressing-table lights and turned the punkah on full. "She'll wait outside the door. If you need her, call her. You will find a whole closet full of Bessie's things; she's just about your size, dear; take any and everything you require. The *panne walla* has just brought your bath. We dine at half after eight, or whenever you are ready."

Rhoda sank into a boudoir chair; she felt hardly able to stand.

"Perhaps you would rather have some tea and a bite sent in to you?" Mrs. Townsend inquired.

"I will be ready in half an hour," Rhoda said, smiling bravely. She could see that Mrs. Townsend would be disappointed if she failed to join them.

"Hokigan is quite efficient," said the Englishwoman, and then with a demonstrativeness rather foreign to her, bent over and kissed the girl's cheek.

"Larry seemed so glad to have you

here," she said softly and went out of the room.

For a few moments the girl huddled in the chair, holding her aching head in her hot hands; then slowly she took off the riding habit and laid it down reverently.

Her arm where Rani had stabbed her was stained with dried and clotted blood, the handkerchief Das had tied around it was stiff and blackened, the pain of the torn flesh was almost unbearable. Biting her lips to grit herself for the effort, Rhoda slipped out of her clothes and went into the bathroom and washed out the ugly cut; then with infinite patience she wound a clean handkerchief over it, tying the knot with one hand and her teeth. Having bathed she opened the closet and taking down a simple frock of blue silk, did her hair and called the ayah to hook her up.

The little woman came, her white sari bunched about her, her wrinkled face curious as a monkey's. She fastened the dress nimbly, marvelling at the light gold hair of the pretty missy sahib.

When Rhoda was dressed she glanced into the long mirror and knew that she had never in her life looked more attractive; her face was vivid with color, her blue eyes unnaturally bright. If only Goring could see her now perhaps he might have loved her. Once he had seen her in the blue kimono, with her hair down, and then in the old gray riding habit—no wonder he had not cared.

The ayah squatting at her feet, sensing the girl's thoughts of love, murmured a charm that the eyes of the Captain sahib might be pleased with the work of Hokigan's hands.

Rhoda never knew how she got through that dinner. She was conscious of a kindly-faced, bearded man at the head of the table across the bowls of saffron roses and maiden-hair

fern; he was Larry's father. His mother sat beside her, and her eyes seemed to plead with the girl, "Be kind, be kind to my boy."

The Captain sat on her right, his haggard young face animated by a new enthusiasm. He told stories of the trenches, of the march on Bagdad, of the horrors of the hospital and once he laughed heartily. Mrs. Townsend exchanged a look with her husband and the expression on her face made the girl's heart ache.

She knew what they were thinking, hoping—that their son would fall in love with her and that she would bring him back to them and to life and hope once more.

Young Townsend led Rhoda out on the terrace for coffee and cigarettes. His father and mother strolled by once or twice and then went into the living-room for their nightly game of cribbage.

It left the boy and girl together under the magic of a full moon floating like a bubble of gold across the star-shot sky. It was a night for romance and love such as only India can give—the perfume of a thousand flowers floated on the air, around the servants' quarters the doves cooed drowsily.

"I say, a chap can't forget the things you said before dinner," Larry began eagerly. "With a girl like you to care a fellow could begin over again and win out after all. Couldn't he now?"

"Yes, he could," said Rhoda. An overwhelming pity stirred within her; his face, beautiful in the moonlight, haunted her. He was going to ask her to give him something, it was going to be so hard to refuse.

"You may think me a mad fool," he cried passionately, "but I know you are the one girl I want to have care. Of course you hardly know me, but just tell me one thing, dear—do I stand a chance?"

Rhoda looked off toward the living-room, where, under the shaded light, she could see the boy's mother and father, face to face at the small card-table. How could she tell him there was no chance, that her heart already lay bruised and crushed within her—that she had nothing to give.

He understood her silence. "You were just talking then," he said bitterly. "It was only words; you didn't mean it."

"Yes, I did mean it," she answered.

"You mean you couldn't care for me," he cried fiercely. "that's it, is it? I'm too smashed up, too—"

"No, no," she interrupted.

"There's someone else then," he said, his eyes on her.

For a long moment she gazed off into the night. "No," she said at last, very slowly, "it's no one else, but I am going to take my father home, away from this terrible country."

"Your father!" he repeated. "Why, you—" He broke off abruptly. "Is that your only reason for turning me down? Is that all that stands between us?" He gripped her hand almost roughly. Goring had wired to break the news to her; she did not know yet that her father was dead.

"What do you mean, all that stands between us?" she cried. "My father is everything I have in the world. For years he has supported me, sacrificed his health, everything, to send me plenty of money and educate me; now I am going to make it up to him. I am going to devote my life to being good to him."

"You can't do that now, little girl," said the boy, who had seen death face to face.

"You mean—something has happened to him, he's—" she cried wildly. "No, it can't be true—it can't be—" She pressed her fists against her quivering lips.

"It is true," he answered solemnly, "but I was a brute to have told you." He reached out and took her hot little hand in his and kissed it tenderly. "I want to spend the rest of my life being good to you, dear—if you'll let me."

The girl made no reply. A deadly numbness seemed to enfold her, a wave of ice to engulf her. She slipped forward against the vine-clung railing and fell to the terrace in merciful unconsciousness.

XII

"I TOLD her about her father," young Townsend said to his mother an hour later. "It's all my fault; if she gets sick it is as if I had deliberately hurt her. It's all my cursed selfishness. I will never forgive myself."

"Don't be foolish, dear heart. The doctor says it is fever and a touch of the sun. She should never have gone to Barampadar in the rains and she has been exposed getting away from there. The shock of what you told her made her faint, but with the loss of blood from that cut in her arm the doctor wonders how she managed to keep up as long as she did. It is my fault for not putting the poor child to bed as soon as she came; but I didn't realize, and you, Larry, seemed so pleased to have her here."

The boy gripped his mother's hand. "Get her well soon, mater," he said hoarsely. "She's the pluckiest, gamest girl I've ever met; and even if she does turn me down it has made a new man of me just knowing her. There's something else to be got out of the game beside sports—she's taught me that."

"God bless her for that," said his mother. "I'll take good care of her for your sake, Larry, to keep her for us all."

And she kept her word. For ten days, shoulder to shoulder with the little

Scotch doctor, she battled for the girl's life and reason. Day after day Larry Townsend haunted the porch outside her room, sending confused appeals to God, from whom he had never begged grace before; day after day Hokigan prostrated herself and laid offerings of rice and ghee before her many gods, praying for the life of the missy sahib.

Then one day as the crusty Saunders hurried away from the bungalow to his motorcycle, he threw the first word of comfort to the boy hanging on his every word and expression.

"She'll pull through," he said gruffly, "but something is worrying her, eating her heart out. Can't make out why she doesn't pick up—the fever's left her and she's young and healthy." He frowned, rumpling his grizzly eyebrows. "Never let anything drop in her ravings—always been about home and college days and girl chums. She's not in love with you, is she, young fellow?"

"Not with me nor with anyone else that I know of," said Larry with a wry smile.

The next morning Larry sat beside his father as the car bowled along the wide roads to the offices of the Copper Company of which the elder Townsend was General Manager.

"I want a job, Dad," said the boy. "I'm sick leave for six months, but there's no use just lying around, being idle. I won't be able to break rock, of course, but I'll earn my salary."

"This is the happiest moment I have known since you went to the front," said the father, clasping his son's hand.

While Rhoda slowly and feebly struggled back to health, Larry Townsend worked at his father's side, animated by Quixotic enthusiasm and eager hopes. Then one afternoon when he came home he found Rhoda out on the maidan, lying back in the big cretonne and wicker lounge-chair in which he had first seen her.

She looked so small and fragile and white that he hesitated by an orange tree to look at her.

The young man took a step forward. She seemed all that was sweet and wonderful in life—the rose lights from a sinking sun tinted her thin little face, her hands lying in her lap looked transparent, her fair hair brushed back from her forehead gave her an almost childish look, but Larry did not see the sadness in her eyes.

"How good it is to see you out!" he said eagerly. "No wonder the sun runs away and hides."

Rhoda looked at him—what a dear, splendid boy he was, how good to her! Then, with the hurt in her heart which was ever present, she thought of Goring—Goring, who during all these three weeks and more had never written or even sent to inquire about her. He might not know that she was sick, but she could not drive out of her mind his indifference and complete forgetfulness of her. And these other people! Larry and his mother; her very own could not have been more kind. How could she ever thank them enough, repay them? There was only one way—she read the answer in Larry's eager eyes.

The tears ran slowly down her cheeks, she gave a little shiver.

"You are cold, my darling," he said in a low voice. It was his first outspoken tenderness. She felt him take her hand in his and she could not draw it away; she could not bear the thought of hurting him, for his own sake and because he was his mother's son. There was nothing she would not do to avoid wounding these people who had loved and cared for her in her hour of greatest need.

"You know I love you, dear," he said, his fine young face close to hers. "I love you."

"I know," she answered in a low voice.

"I shall win your whole love, Rhoda," he said, "God willing. You like me a little already, do you not, dear?"

"I like you—a great deal," she answered gravely.

"Then love will follow," he cried radiantly. "You know, of course," he added after a pause, "that your father has left an unexpected account in a Calcutta bank. Word only came of it a few days ago; it is not very much, but plenty, dear, to see you home, should you want to go." He tried to make his manner matter-of-fact, but his voice faltered a little. "I should be—we'd all be awfully cut up, Rhoda, if you wouldn't stay," he ended.

This thought it was which burned itself into the girl's brain. Gratitude! There was but one return for all the kindness she had received. Other dreams she might have had—Goring's indifference had shattered. And Larry! No woman could help learning to care for him; time would teach her to love him.

She felt him bending over her, his kiss on her soft hair.

"Come in, dear," he said gently, "mother will be happy to see us," and he led her into the bungalow.

XIII

THOUGH Miss Waler did not definitely announce her engagement to Captain Townsend, she made no efforts to deny it. A kind of apathy seized her, a touch of the fatalism of the country. She let things drift. Why struggle? What for—an empty dream that was over.

She would make Larry a good wife. He needed her and her reward was in the new happiness she saw coming back into his face, some of the sunshine of his boyhood days; she noted the quiet joyousness of his mother, the reborn

pride in his father's eyes as he looked on the son given back to him.

A peace seemed to enter Rhoda's soul, the content that only unselfishness can give. The clamorous longing, the passionate hopes, the madness of joy of those few hours she had known Goring passed from her, taking some of her youth with it.

As she grew stronger the people of the station began to drop in to tea. They congratulated Rhoda and wondered what the stunning young Captain could see in that poor, washed-out-looking little mite who seemed so unenthusiastic over her engagement.

It was all too ridiculous for words—who was she anyway? An American, a mere nobody picked up goodness knows where, without any clothes or money; why, she was wearing all Bessie Townsend's last season's frocks. Her father had been mine manager at Barampadar—not that unspeakable creature, Sam Waler, they had thrown out of the Club! He was dead now—well, really, she came of elegant stock!

But Larry's devotion left no doubt in the minds of the several disappointed and highly eligible young ladies that he was desperately in love with the girl; and Mrs. Townsend seemed as delighted as her son.

"Where did you meet the Captain?" a certain Miss Witherspoon inquired one afternoon with a chilly simper meant to be sentimental.

"Miss Waler has only been in India a very short time," Mrs. Townsend answered, seeing that the girl looked pale and tired. "It was Mr. Goring who introduced her to us."

"You mean Temple Goring, the I.C.S. man?" gushed Miss Weather-spoon. "Have you heard the latest about him?"

"No," came an interested chorus over the teacups.

Rhoda felt the blood leap suddenly in

her veins; she was stifled, as if the mention of his name had roused emotions she thought were dead. Her thin little hands gripped the sides of her chair; she must escape out into the compound or surely betray herself.

"It seems," continued Miss Weather-
spoon, thoroughly relishing the recital of her bit of gossip, "that the Government is perfectly furious at Mr. Heckers for the way he has let this Santali trouble get out of hand. They hold him responsible and quite rightly, too; he has never moved out of the Residency here, and it was Goring who went right out into the jungle, rounded up the natives, had some kind of a palaver with them and got them positively to lay down their bows and arrows and give up the ring leaders. It is next door to a miracle, they say, his settling it all peacefully. It's a regular triumph for Temple Goring, and the long and the short of it is," she poised a diminutive sandwich under a generously proportioned nose, pausing dramatically, "Mr. Heckers has been given the sack and Temple Goring is to be Political Agent in his place."

In the confusion of exclamations and excitement over this startling information, Rhoda slipped away unostentatiously into the garden and sat down on a vine-twisted, rustic seat. Success and promotion had come to him, but he had not had time or thought to even send her a line.

What a fool she was to be pining for such a man—her heart hardened suddenly against him. She would put him out of her mind and marry Larry—dear, gallant Larry. She would make him wonderfully happy.

Far down the road she heard the snort of his motor horn and the tearing of a machine toward the bungalow. He was coming home earlier than usual, hurrying to her. She rose slowly to meet him—she would tell him this eve-

ning what he wanted to hear, promise to marry him whenever he wished.

Her eyes on the ground, her heart dull and heavy, she passed under the rose arbor. A trailing spray thick with blossoms caught in the lace of her skirt; she stooped to disentangle herself from the thorns. A man's step came rapidly toward her; she could hear the crunch of gravel under his grinding heel. She looked up and a cry escaped her. It was not Townsend but Goring himself.

"Miss Waler," he said eagerly looking hungrily into the girl's face.

To Rhoda he seemed thinner, browner than when she had seen him last, but there was a wonderful light in the keen eyes behind the glasses.

"How you surprised me!" she said in a low voice. "You were the last person I expected to see. I was waiting for Captain Townsend." She said the last stiffly and with a slight effort.

"I grabbed Townsend's car—didn't even wait to ask him for it. I was so anxious to get here to see you."

Rhoda made no reply. Goring's face sobered swiftly. She was displeased, angry at him. How small she looked and how terribly frail! There was no color in her face and her slender body seemed wasted.

"You are not glad to see me," he said quietly.

"I cannot be very enthusiastic after your neglect of all these days. You never troubled to write or inquire."

"Write or inquire!" he cried in amazement. "Why, my dear child, for the last month I have been miles and miles back in the jungle, away from communication of any sort. It was not until today that I heard of my appointment and I came right here—to you."

"I must congratulate you, Mr. Goring," she said coldly. How surprisingly easy it was to go through with forms after one's heart was broken.

The joyous, eager look had left Goring's face.

"You must congratulate me, too," Rhoda went on, viciously tearing a rose bud to pieces. He had made her suffer—perhaps in turn she would hurt him. "I am engaged to Captain Townsend."

"No!" he cried sharply. He took a step toward her as if his towering bulk might overwhelm her into a denial. Rage seized him for a moment—it had meant nothing to her after all. She had let him kiss her lightly as pretty girls sometimes do; he had held her in his arms close against his heart and the dreams he had dreamed were all lies.

What did his advancement mean to him now? She was going to marry another. The home and position he had gloated over because he could have given them to her, what did it amount to, after all?

"Good-bye, Miss Waler," he said at last, breaking the strained silence as the bruised petals of the flower fluttered to his feet. "I shall not go up to the bungalow just now; I'll pay my respects to Mrs. Townsend later. I hope you will be very happy." His voice was not quite steady. "I know he will be if you love him." He held out his hand to her, but she trembled so she could not touch his fingers.

He looked down at her sharply. How dark the shadows were under her blue eyes! For a moment the desire to take her in his arms, to feel again the sweetness of her close against his heart, stirred the man's every sense; but she did not love him—she was going to marry Townsend. In honor he was bound to go away and leave her, not to see her any more.

He would refuse the new appointment. It would be madness for him to try and live in the same station with her; he cared too much, he would always care. He would apply for a transfer to another post where climatic con-

ditions made for frequent vacancies.

"I shall say good-bye again, Miss Waler," he said. "I shall not see you again. I am leaving Tashi directly."

"But," faltered Rhoda, "I thought you were to be the Political Agent here."

"I shall not accept," he answered.

"Why?" she asked. She could not be blind now, nor harden herself completely to the suffering in his eyes.

"Because I love you," he answered in a low voice. "I could not tell you that before. I had nothing to offer you—and I cannot tell you now. I have been a conceited fool. Good-bye," and he turned away from her.

Above her head a hawk circled gracefully. There was a roaring in the girl's ears. Out on the road she could hear a motor stop again before the gates of the compound. Instinctively she reached out her hands; it had all been a ghastly mistake—he cared after all—nothing else mattered.

"Don't go!" she breathed, but so softly that he scarcely heard.

He turned to her.

"You mean—" he cried, his voice trembling.

She lifted her face to his. "I love you," she said simply. "I loved you from the first—but I did not think you—liked me."

"Didn't *like* you!" he cried, crushing her hands in his.

"I have been so sick," the girl went on, "and they were all so good to me; I should have died if it hadn't been for his mother. I suppose it was weak of me, but I couldn't say 'no' and I was sure you had forgotten me."

"My girl, my poor little girl," he said, holding her hungrily against his breast. He lifted her face and looked into her eyes. "You believe now that I have not forgotten you—that I care?" and he kissed her on the lips.

There was a step behind them on the

gravel path, a spray of roses swayed violently.

"Beg pardon," said Larry Townsend, his young face desperately white.

"Larry," said the girl, "I've done wrong. Though you may come to forgive me, I shall not forgive myself. I never loved you as I should have done, but I hadn't the courage to refuse you."

"I knew you did not care the way I did," the boy answered. "I thought in time I could make you. I see now that was impossible." And he glanced bitterly at Goring.

"You are angry at me," she said sadly.

"How could I be," he said. "I love you very much; I don't regret that and just knowing you has given me back

everything I thought was gone. I'm not going to lose out just because the odds are against me." He turned away for a moment, his lips twitching, then he held out his hand to Goring.

"Good luck, old man," he said hoarsely. "Be good to her."

"God helping me, I will," said Goring.

"I wish it had been I they'd sent to fix up the Santals and you to fight the Turks," the boy said with a whimsical smile, and turning slowly, left them.

Hand in hand, the man and the girl watched him go.

In the deepening twilight a thousand fireflies flitted in the shrubbery like tiny dancing stars, a crescent moon swung fairly in the violet sky, as, hidden by the roses, Goring kissed her again.



Tragedy

By Frederick Moxon

YOU did not know! And I must live
 Remembering the hurt, whose pain
 A poignant memory shall remain,
 Although I love you, and forgive.
 You did not know.

It was not any word you said
 (Your speech was honeyed kindliness),
 That turned my joy to swift distress
 And struck my dearest rapture dead.
 You did not know.

I smiled, and still danced on, for O!
 How women hide their hurts from men:
 And yet I could have killed you, when
 You kicked the chilblain on my toe!
 You did not know.

Reflections of a Vampire

By June Gibson

I



GAZE at Paul through lowered lashes and he thinks I tempt . . . and pants. . . . If I looked open-eyed upon his freckled nose and florid neck I would order him from the house.

II

HARRY's wife does not know that there are two kinds of wives: those who manage their husbands and those who pretend they do not.

III

WHEN I pass my hands lingeringly across Robert's sleek hair, he trembles. He does not know that my jeweled fingers are more pleasing to look upon than the top of his head where it is beginning to grow bald.

IV

JOHN brings me pearls to match my exquisite beauty. When he comes again I am wearing a clever duplicate of paste. . . . The pearls are educating my grandchildren.

V

PETER thrills at my anger when he drops a roll of crisp green bills in my

lap. It pleases him to think my love for him genuine, not to be bought. . . . I am angry because he gives me the bills before my servant to whom I owe three months' wages.

VI

As I throw myself with abandon into Vincent's arms he does not know that his scarf pin is being concealed in the folds of my gown.

VII

YESTERDAY Frank's wife pleaded with me. She does not know that it is better to have a husband who is false than to have no husband to be false.

VIII

I CLUTCH my bosom when Harold kisses me. He imagines he has aroused my passion. . . . I catch the odor of corned beef and cabbage escaping from the kitchen.

IX

THERE are two kinds of women: those who are not afraid of mice and those who have well-shaped legs.



Limbering Up Ebenezer

By Harry Irving Shumway



ONCE a man there was, a fat man, strange to say, who just loved to have money around him. He didn't have the first nickel he ever made because he swapped it for a dime with another kid; he told the other kid that the nickel was bigger than the dime and therefore must be worth lots more.

This Ebenezer went from boyhood to manhood and only one person had ever seen him spend anything. But how could this trusting observer know that it was a lead nickel that the tightwad was springing on a slot machine for chocolate?

Shortly after he had got so used to walking in long pants that his gait had little or no suggestion of the spring halt, he began to look around for a cheap wife. Sad to say, most of the girls in his town cared for candy. Many of them had been known to express a desire to attend dances. Flowers he wasn't afraid of; was not the wayside unprofitably gay with the choicest blooms that any girl could wish? It was a long still-hunt and many times he lost the scent and had to go back and pick up the long, long trail all over again. But he had the tenacity of a coon hound. If there was an inexpensive wife in embryo or any other place, he would bring her to earth. So one day he espied one who had all the earmarks of a girl who might become passionately fond of a calico wrapper. She fitted into the landscape, which was mostly of granite.

"Do you really like water to drink?" asked the Ebenezer, as he watched her sipping from the tin dipper at the well.

"I love it. It is the only drink in the world," she answered, smiling.

"What beautiful teeth you have! I'll bet you never eat candy; otherwise those pearls would not shine so."

"I loathe it," replied the one made to order.

"What is that gown you have on, calico or gingham?" he inquired, his hands trembling like those of one reaching for a blind man's cup.

"Neither. It is a cotton print. Don't you love it?"

The Ebenezer had to dig his fingernails into the palms of his hands to keep from yelling "Hallelujah." He plucked a spray of goldenrod from the roadside and presented it to her.

"Oh, how sweet! Thank you."

"Wait here," breathed the pecuniary Lothario. He skipped first and second, and went right into high speed, headed in the general direction of the Town Hall. As he passed the half-mile post he remembered that the Congregational minister owed him two bucks. The Ebenezer had been raised an Episcopalian, but two bucks are two bucks and the knot would be tied by the Congregationalist.

As he breezed abaft the three-quarter post, breathing a bit but compression one hundred per cent, he recalled that he had something coming from a brakeman on the P. & R. The P. & R. was only a branch road, boasting of a panorama of stock-yards, rolling mills and much swamp. But what place has

scenery when two economical heafis beat in rhythm? The brakeman had a pass for self and wife was the idea. The Ebenezer could take it away from him and use it himself.

He had to put on both brakes to keep from going right through the Town Hall. At the sign marked "Licenses" he stopped.

"I would like a license," he remarked.

"Dog or Marriage?" inquired the official wag.

"How much are they?"

"Dog two dollars, Marriage one dollar."

"Gimme a Marriage license then," said Ebenezer, beginning to feel that it really was a better bargain than he had thought.

The two gay birds, now man and wife, eased out of the home town on the milk train the next morning. The sun came up just as they opened up the shoe box of tongue sandwiches and home-made pickles. And it was a glorious sight. At the Junction he punched the slot for a small piece of gum. He broke it in two pieces, putting one into his mouth and retrieving the other to Bessie. She was, as he had surmised, staggered with the munificence of the gift. The thing was going off beautifully. About ten miles further on, a driving shaft broke and the engineer had to stop for repairs. Was it not Providence itself that had snapped the steel right in the midst of the loveliest bed of wild roses? The Ebenezer garnered a huge bouquet of these and brought them to his sweetheart. She said she had never seen such wonderful flowers and he smiled like a man who has just been notified by the Savings Bank that he had deposited to the limit.

The turtle-doves flew into town late that night in a cloud of soft coal smoke, but happy. The exchequer had been called upon to the extent of one cent.

It was the end of an almost perfect day, the penny spoiling the score.

They went to housekeeping in a little gray house, with Gothic here and there, mixed with a little real American 1881 period. There were no iron setters guarding the moat, but from the back attic window you could catch a glimpse of Swift River.

When ten years had been marked off by the speedometer, Bessie found that her mileage had been good, but that speed had been sadly lacking. Even though one at eighteen sees nothing but beauty in a cotton print of Persian derivation, it is no sign that later on it will still bring the same throb of pleasure. Though goldenrod may have seemed pretty once, it gives some people hay fever. And after a while one sees there is so much water in the world that it would be hopeless to try to drink all of it. In other words, ten years had made Bessie long for the things she often read about in the magazine that came to the house, free of charge, every month.

The Ebenezer was so enraptured with addition that he had forgotten all about that charming pastime, subtraction.

Along about this time, Bessie's sister from the city paid her a visit. Six trunks preceded her and more were to follow. When Ebenezer met her at the station he took a long breath before checking up the inventory. Her clothes, he knew, amounted to enough to clear the mortgage on the church. Had he thought quickly enough he would have put her back on the train, but by the time his brain had worked it out correctly the wheels were rolling along.

Of course the sisters had a good long talk, when the Ebenezer had gone back to the works. That is, sister talked. Bessie listened.

"Dear, I can see that you have something coming to you. How long have you been here?"

"Ten years."

"Have you ever seen a movie?"

"Once."

"Can you do the fox-trot?"

"What is it?"

"How often does Ebenezer bring you orchids?"

"Never. I don't care for fruit."

"Well, let's have a cocktail and talk things over."

"We sold the poultry two weeks ago. Ebenezer said the market was right."

"It is as I thought," said sister, rolling up her sleeves. "Listen. This Midas X. Bluebeard has perpetrated high crime upon you. You have been in jail ten years and never even asked the guard the way out. First, where does the ogre keep the scads, the mazuma, the pieces of eight?"

"If you mean money, every bank in the county."

"Have you ever asked for any of it?"

"Once. Then when I saw how cruel I was to even think of it I was so sorry. He forgave me though, after a while."

Sister looked at her long and thoughtfully. Then she told her all about it. When she got through, Bessie realized how thoroughly well done she had been. The light broke through the mist and birds began to twitter.

"It is going to be rough work, getting this Reserve Bank to come across. What is his weakness?" asked sister.

"Carry on. You are on vacant land," answered Bessie, or words to that effect.

"Then we must get something on him. Has he ever done anything that wouldn't check up with Blackstone? Has he ever toyed with the widows and orphans?"

"He has never actually murdered anybody with a knife," answered the wronged wife. "But the other things, I guess, he has done."

"You are sure?"

"Fairly. Nobody has ever been able to bring him up short. But with your

advice and what I know, maybe we can do it."

"Good," said sister. "I fancy I can hear the purse-strings loosening now."

Suffice it to say that the work was done. These two innocent women gathered enough general and particular information to satisfy the most fastidious. Bessie unlocked the volcano one night at supper.

"Ebenezer," she said, with the utmost assurance, "I want twenty thousand dollars."

A wound like that is liable to bring on fatal results, but Ebenezer had faced many a wronged party and he had the recipe.

"Ha, ha! That's a good one. Where did you get it? Out of the magazine, I'll bet. Tell me another while I eat."

"This isn't on the funny page, Ebenezer. Kindly be good to my ears and lay off the soup. Now let's begin."

Ebenezer didn't believe he was living, but decided to say nothing. Bessie went on.

"For ten years you have been my husband, and if you wish to continue in that role, why you may have the same part, but there will be new stage business. Any wife ought to have at least two thousand dollars a year for herself to keep the ennui from the door. Ten of these years would be twenty thousand dollars, just the amount I asked you for. You see, I am generous; I haven't asked for any interest while you have had the money. Although, I expect you will force it on me anyway. Now, Eb, if the money is forthcoming and a regular monthly amount at that rate henceforth, why we can go right ahead with the soup. Otherwise we talk on.

"Madame, you are either crazy or the victim of something. I refuse to listen to you."

"Why, you old rat," hissed the ten-year Rip Van Winkle. "You say you

won't listen to me? If you don't want the skids put under you, you had better harken. I have enough on you to send you to the pen for 400 years. You were too clever for anybody else to check you up, but I have it on you."

"What d'you mean?" gasped the Ebenezer, backed against the wall.

"How about the bonds you stole from Widow Wilkes? How about the phoney mortgage you foreclosed on Mrs. Smith? How about the perfectly good railway bonds you transferred for worthless oil stock, while trustee for Bascom's boy? How about that deal with old blind Peters? And the other dirty job you did to Old Man Jenkins? Do you want the whole list?"

"Enough!" squealed Ebenezer.

"Well, how about it? Am I going to wear orchids for breakfast or do you

want to swap that alpaca coat for a striped one?"

"You win, my dear," said Ebenezer. "Shall I bring it home or bank it for you?"

"I want one of those dinky little checkbooks. Have it upholstered in mauve and plenty of blanks."

Bessie left two days later for the big city. Her plan was to enjoy everything there was there, and send home what she didn't have time for at the moment.

Everything was working fine and the dollars were chasing each other like automobiles out of Detroit, when one day the Ebenezer got up nerve enough to ask Bessie how she found him out.

"Easy," she answered. "You talk fluently and in detail every night in your sleep."

If you have no sister, ask a friend.



Desire

By Hale Merriman

I'D like to marry one of them—
Kitty, bright and naughty—
Jolly, carefree little Em'—
Evelyn, who's naughty—

There's Katherine, who's very fair—
But neither fat nor forty—
And Dixie, with the baby stare—
And Geraldine—sporty—

Dear Pollyanna, fond of wine—
Alice, pert and saucy—
Cora, June and Adeline—
Even Corrinne, bossy—

To hold my lips against the gem
Of one's sweet lips would salve be;
I'd like to marry one of them—
If—one of them would have me!

The Green Hat

By V. Omar Whitehead



THE street was deserted save for the usual be-rated policeman, and a few amorous cats, which oblivious to all but "Tamour," made pledges and sang serenades in their fashion, even though draggled and cold from the fog which mantled all in a diaphanous but disagreeable cloak, through which the moon shone fitfully.

It was in that part of the city which belonged to the Bohemian element, and though eminently respectable to look at, was often the scene of boisterous hilarity; but now even the night hawk had long since wobbled his way home. The fog had put down a dampener against which even the spontaneous spirits of Bohemia could not prevail, and one might, at this hour, imagine that these houses were inhabited by the most sober of longhairs.

On the steps of a house rather more pretentious than its neighbors, two cats sang in melancholy unison, and nearby the policeman seeking what shelter he could find, enjoyed even their companionship, as compared to the deadly hush of the fog blanketed street. Without preface, the door of the house was suddenly flung open, and the cats with one dismal but most vociferous yowl sprang apart, and there followed a silence so profound that the policeman could hear the heavy breathing of the man who stood for a moment in the doorway; a red shaded lamp somewhere back in the interior, throwing his figure into a shadowy silhouette. Leaving the door slightly ajar the man ran swiftly but none too steadily down the

steps and turned along the street away from the policeman. Used to such sights, the guardian of the peace watched the man disappear in the mist. And now that the entertaining cats had vanished, the hushed silence, which only a fog can produce, left him no other companionship than that of his own footfalls, so he continued on his beat.

He had taken but a few steps when the stillness was broken by shrieks, the shrieks of a woman in terror, perhaps in mortal agony, a light in the house flashed on and off, and the screams died down, or as the policeman thought, were choked back, and again there was the peculiar quietness of the fog laden air.

The neighbors used to all kinds of noises, paid no attention, but the policeman, his professional acumen aroused, investigated.

The following morning Brainerd Bennison was late down to breakfast, and his wife, a little dark-eyed woman, remarked with a suggestion of reproach in her voice, as she handed him the morning paper.

"You had to work late again on that old case last night. I might just as well be a doctor's wife, the little I see of you."

And Bennison snapped back, as a man will when trying to cover his own failings,

"Well, why didn't you marry Doctor Illington, he wanted you bad enough, and you still seem to enjoy his attentions."

After a moment's hesitation which Bennison did not notice, she said: "I think you are horrid, Brainerd. Ever since little Marie came I have seen less

and less of you. It's no wonder I—"

"There, Aileen, I'm sorry, I'm upset this morning. I was thinking on my way home last night we would start in studying my cases together again," he propitiated, reaching over and patting her hand which rested on the table beside him.

"Oh, that would be lovely. Do you really mean it? Why what's the matter? You are hurting me, Brainerd!"

Looking down at him she saw beads of perspiration break out on his forehead, as gripping both newspaper and her hand he gazed fixedly at the bold headings which confronted him, and Aileen following his eyes read over his shoulder, "Attempted Murder Of Doris Dacre. Only Clue A Man's Green Hat."

"Why she is your client in the case you were working on last night, isn't she, Brainerd?"

"Yes—I— Good God!" he exclaimed, as he ran his hand back over his head. "It can't be true."

Aileen read aloud; "The Only Clue A Man's Green Hat!"

"You needn't read it aloud, I'm quite capable of reading for myself," Brainerd interrupted irritably, and added nervously. "I must get down to the office they—they may need me."

"But, Brainerd, you haven't eaten any breakfast."

"No, I can't eat any, either. You do not understand how—how this has upset me." He pushed her aside almost roughly as he went past her into the hall.

As he was putting on his coat Aileen opened the door to the hall, which he had closed.

"You are not going without kissing me, are you, dear?"

"Why, no, of course not," he replied, and kissing her somewhat hurriedly, he said,

"There, don't stand in the hall, it's

cold," at the same time taking her by the arm he urged her back into the room and closed the door, making sure that it was latched; he turned to the hat rack, took down a hat and left.

Aileen, when she heard the door close, went to the window and looked out after him, then back to the hall where she glanced at the hat rack, and stood pondering a few moments; presently she gave her shoulders a little shake as if to throw off a burden, and went upstairs to little Marie.

Brainerd Bennison did not go to the office that day, but telephoned instead that he would be out of town. His partner, junior in age and action, surmising to the stenographer, remarked,

"Gone on a little detective work in the Dacre case, I expect. I shouldn't wonder if the attack on her was connected with the damage suit."

"Well, I dunno," disagreed the stenographer, who was perhaps a little older than the junior partner. "Maybe he has, but I've a sneaking idea he'd be studying the case at the hospital. Where is this damage suit I'd like to know? I think it's a cam-u-flage. You know yourself there have been no papers, indeed nothing drawn up, except two chairs in his office. I don't believe there was ever anything damaged but her character and you can't damage what's already spoilt."

The junior partner drew himself up with the dignity which he supposed his position demanded.

"I think, Miss Goran, we are assuming too much. Will you please take this letter?"

And Miss Goran, because stenography was her living, her profession, if you please, said no more, at least not to the junior partner, but—she had many friends who found her quite entertaining as a raconteur.

Contrary to their imaginings, Brainerd Bennison had gone to the hills,

where seated with his back to a rock, in a secluded spot some distance from the regular trail, he took out the newspaper and was again confronted by the glaring headlines that seemed to have been seared into his brain.

He read again: "Attempted Murder of Doris Dacre. Only Clue Man's Green Hat." With nerve tensed muscles he continued through the narration which followed.

"Doris Dacre, who won her way into the hearts of the multitude with her wonderful voice and most human portrayals, will never again delight the senses of her patrons and admirers. She was found stabbed, probably to death, and the only clue to her assassin thus far discoverable, is a man's green hat, which he most evidently forgot in his hurry to escape before her screams brought assistance; screams which the knife wound in her throat had suddenly shut off.

"Admired by all men and sought by many, she whose voice and personal charm have brought her many triumphs, is now lying at death's door in St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Unable to speak and according to the doctors never again likely to; though they are still hoping against hope that she will recover sufficiently to give the name of her cowardly assassin.

"Conjecture naturally points to jealousy as the cause; for a woman of her magnetic power, whose beautiful form and sparkling vitality have been the envy of women and the admiration of men, is sure to have lovers, and it is suggested that among them may be found the murderer. The ordinary stage Johnnies may easily be eliminated for they would never have the nerve nor the strength, which, according to the condition of the room and its contents, must have been used in the struggle.

"It might have been a jealous woman,

for more than one married man has worshipped at her shrine, but the green hat is mute though convincing evidence to the contrary, and those who have seen Miss Dacre say that everything points to the fact that a man both physically and passionately strong committed the crime.

"The police are sure that it will be easy to trace the owner of the hat and are promising some startling developments before night.

"In an interview, Policeman Leary, who found Miss Dacre, deposed that he was attracted by her screams, and that a short time before hearing them he had seen a man leave her house, but had paid little attention to this.

" 'Them Bohemians have company at all times of the night,' he explained.

"He was unable to see what the man looked like, or to say if he wore a hat, it was too foggy to see. But, he volunteered, there had been one man calling pretty frequently of late, who wore a hat like the one found, whom he thought he could identify should he see him. He believed the man whom he saw leave the house had time to return before he heard the screams, and stated he had stumbled over the green hat as he entered the room where he found Miss Dacre, and upon seeing that she still breathed he had called an ambulance."

There were more details and some suppositions advanced, all of which Bennison read and re-read till his brain seemed dulled and every nerve tingled.

"Fool," he said to the surrounding hills. "Fool to leave my hat."

Thrusting the newspaper in his inside pocket, he rose and walked off at a nervous speed, he did not know why nor where, only that he was climbing, that the physical exercise was what he needed to offset the turmoil of his brain.

As he walked his brain cleared, and

he saw himself in a new light. He became his own denunciator. He tore his character to shreds. He had a vision of himself in court his life held up to public view, and winced.

Women always appealed to Bennison, especially if they gave him a little flattery, but he soon tired of them, he wanted variety, the excitement of the chase; still through every affair he had always loved his wife. No one could take her place.

Women, *et id genus omne*, stirred him, but being æsthetic in his taste, his *affaires d'amour* had been limited.

It was, he accused himself, his fear of public opinion which held him in check, for he had always managed to carry his amours to an exciting pitch, and, well, he had never gotten himself into trouble before.

His common sense had told him to keep away from actresses, but Doris Dacre had been irresistible, and last night had been the culmination. If only he had brought away his hat, no one need have known. Of course, they would find that she had cut her own throat; he had not thought she would do that. The doctors said she might not recover, he hoped she would not, then hated himself for the thought, giving, however, the sop to his conscience that it would be better than to ruin the happiness of his wife and baby.

He saw himself hung by circumstantial evidence; the tracing of the hat and the recognition by the policeman, convicting him.

One moment he was filled with self pity, the next he was blurring out self accusations. Fear of the consequences was followed by resolutions and promises that if he ever got out of this he would forever leave women alone.

He understood for the first time that the sanctity of the home depends as much on the man as on the woman.

Scared and contrite, in this hour he

was sure that all women save his wife were anathema. He had walked over mountains and through gullies, paying little attention to where he was going, till tired mentally and physically, his thoughts turned to home and wife. She at least would not believe him guilty of murder. And of the other? If she knew, perhaps she would condone, forgive.

At home comfort awaited for both body and spirit; so like a wayward child who had run away from punishment, and found the terrors mentally conjured worse than the penalty he had fled, he turned back home willing to take the punishment, because he knew it would be tempered by love.

Avoiding frequented places, going by by-ways, he drew near his home. Desiring but fearing to hear what developments had evolved during the day he gave a wide berth to all places where such news might be heard.

As he drew nearer home his thoughts flew thick and fast, wavering between a resolve to make a clean breast of all his actions and relations between Doris Dacre and himself, to a self-imposed view of the situation which pictured the suffering of his wife and child. He told himself it was for their sake he must avoid any disclosure, but knew it was himself of whom he was thinking.

Half a block from his house he saw the light from the front room glowing across the sidewalk, and knew his wife was waiting for him, that little Marie would be expecting some candy, and after giving him a big "yug" as she called it, would begin searching his pockets, a game they played when he reached home before she went to bed; which, of late, had not been often, he remembered.

For a moment he stood outside, and a wave of love surged through him, love for his home, his wife and child. The travail of his conscience and the rebirth of his love contending with his

selfishness seemed as if it would tear him apart. A sob rose in his throat, of love or self pity, possibly of both, but he knew in that moment he loved his wife and child, that their love and respect was more to be desired than all the flatteries and passions of secret paramours.

Quietly he inserted the key in the door, and opened and closed it behind him. The hall was dimly lighted by one small globe set in the ceiling; its one object seemingly to make shadows rather than to give light.

He took off his hat, reached out to hang it on the rack and stopped midway, his eyes staring wildly. Was it an hallucination? His green hat hung there! Then they had found him. Gone now was his bravery, he would have run away only he thought detectives had seen him enter the house, and had surrounded it to prevent his escape, perhaps they were in the house. He looked into the shadows.

Trembling he reached out to see if the hat were real, and the nervous shaking of his hand dislodged something which fell with a loud clatter to the floor. He heard whispered words in the room, followed by a silence, then receding footsteps, and his ears attuned by fright, detected lighter ones as if tip-toeing, coming toward him; he distinctly heard the opening and closing of a door in the back of the house. Paralyzed he braced himself against the moment when he should feel the hand on his shoulder and hear a voice proclaim his arrest.

The door to the front room opened, he watched it fascinated, expecting he knew not what, and when his wife stood revealed in the flood of light, he blinking looked beyond her seeking that which his fear led him to expect. Consciously that his wife was talking nervously he let her lead him into the dining room, his eyes searching, his senses

alert, he heard but did not sense her words. Seated at the table he took the evening paper which she held out to him, while his eyes searched her face. Supersensitive, he read there that she knew, and because her eyes would not meet his own, supposed she was trying to keep it from him.

As she would have left him, he said in a voice that did not sound like his own.

"Wait, Aileen."

But the look on her face when she returned he could not interpret.

"It is useless," he said looking away and trying to control his voice, "for you to pretend," he paused and cleared his throat—had he been looking he would have seen Aileen grasp the door for support—"to pretend you do not know, it was my green hat which was found at Doris Dacre's. I saw that you suspected it this morning, and, of course, now that the police have brought it back—"

"Brought it back! Your hat?" Aileen stammered.

"Let me finish, dear. I have spent the day in retrospections and self criminations. I have not been as loyal to you as I expected you to be to me. I saw where I might be accused of murder, and it was the faith that you would believe in my innocence which brought me back."

He read relief in her face.

"And, Aileen, I want you to know that the events of the last twenty-four hours have brought me to my senses. I am going to be different, but it is no use my making promises. Will you take me back, at least on probation?"

"Why, Brainerd I—I— Yes—I?"

She stuttered with a confusion for which at the time he could not account, but waiting no longer, he pushed his chair back so that it fell over, went quickly to her and took her in his arms.

Still ardourously clasping her, he

asked. "When did they bring back my hat?" As she hesitated, he added, "I saw it in the hall, you know."

He felt Aileen turn cold in his arms, and saw her eyes grow round with fear.

"Come, dear," he encouraged, "I can stand the worst."

"They didn't bring it," Aileen whispered in a frightened voice. "It—is—was—" she hesitated, sparring for time. Then suddenly:

"You say you saw I suspected about the hat this morning. Well, when I read the paper and noticed you did not wear your green hat, and then later that it was not on the rack, I went out and b—"

"Daddy! Daddy, you did come back! Now movvy it's my turn to be yugged." And Marie in her tiny blue pajamas pushed in between them, and clambered up till her soft arms were entwined around his neck.

The tears started from his eyes. There was nothing in all the world worth this, and he held her close to his heart.

"Yere 'at was a big yug," she declared in her baby talk and climbed down. "Now, where is my candy?" she asked.

He let her search for a while, enjoying the ramblings of her tiny hands. Impetuously he picked her up.

"Daddy," he said, "forgot all about your candy, Marie, so he'll have to put

some money in your bank." And with much ceremony he deposited "a whole big nickel."

"Now, Marie, must go to bed like a good little girl," he enjoined, and glancing over at Aileen who still stood by the door white and immobile, he added: "poor movvy's tired."

"Muvvy?" inquired Marie without warning, "Why did the man go 'ivout his pitty green hat?"

Brainerd shot a glance at his wife, who was leaning heavily on the door.

"What man, Marie?" he asked.

"Why, Doctor Illington, he went out the back door like this." She struggled from his arms and tiptoed out of the door looking back over her shoulder.

Brainerd did not look at his wife, instead he chased Marie crying:

"You rascal, run along to bed," and gave her a spank as she ran up the stairs.

Returning he found his wife still standing, but now in a defiant attitude. Ignoring the challenge in her eyes he clasped her in his arms and kissed her, then suddenly burst out laughing.

Aileen pulled away from him.

"I don't see anything to laugh at," she bristled.

He held her at arm's length and smiled teasingly,

"Don't you? Well, I was thinking that now, it will be Illington who will have to worry about the loss of a green hat."



BROTHER—"Do you think father and mother ought to be allowed to see this play?"

SISTER—"Why not? They're so old-fashioned that its risqué lines will be over their heads."

Whose Was the Hand?

By Francis Harmer



HE doctor turned sympathetically to the wife, as she followed him from her husband's room.

"You will try stimulants?" she said. Her

voice sounded like the muted strings of a violin. It was low, and rich, but curiously muffled.

He shook his head.

"My dear Madam—if you insist. But my many years of practice have shown me that stimulants are often—a needless cruelty. He is passing peacefully, painlessly away. Stimulants would possibly prolong his life by some hours and deprive him of that passing. He might die in agony. Can you wish that?"

The wife, a tall, slender woman, with an oval face of much calm and passionless beauty, shook her head. The doctor, looking at her, wondered what lay behind that placid exterior. He remembered to have heard that the Calhouns were reported as rather unhappily mated—yet she seemed anxious to have all done that could be done, for her dying husband.

"I am sure," the pause had been perceptible, "that you know best."

"Of course," the physician answered, hastily, "I am more than willing for a consultation, if—"

Mrs. Calhoun lifted her hand.

"You are at the head of the medical profession within reach," she negatived.

"It would be—useless"

She bowed him out, and turned to face the nurse, who was coming out of

the dining room. She seemed almost out of place in the darkened, gloomy house, for she was young and rosy, and her blue eyes were full of fire and feeling. She carried a little tray on which Mrs. Calhoun saw a spirit lamp, a bowl of beef tea, and a spoon.

"The doctor said no more stimulants," Mrs. Calhoun reminded her.

"I know, Mrs. Calhoun. But I saved my mother's life—she is well and hearty now—by disregarding the doctor's orders, and giving her, every thirty seconds, alternate half tea spoonfuls of fine champagne and beef tea—no more than half a teaspoonful. The doctor said nothing could do any harm. Won't you let me try?"

"How long did you keep that up?" Mrs. Calhoun's dark eyes were staring out in the darkness of the rear hall.

"All night, I think. The time went by like a flash. If you will let me—?"

"No." Eleanor Calhoun took the tray from the nurse's hand. "I will do that—myself. Bring me the champagne, will you? Opened, of course. And you sleep in the little room, that I may call you, if there is need."

The nurse, though obviously disappointed, obeyed at once. Mrs. Calhoun went slowly into the sick room and arranged a stand near her husband's side, pulling a chair into place, adding cushions and a footstool, that she might have the necessary physical ease in her work.

The nurse re-entered the room, with the bottle and glass, and another spoon. Then, with unfeigned reluctance she

left the wife to what might be the watches by the dead—or, might not!

Eleanor looked at the invalid. A big man, with evidences of having been a handsome one. His hair, longer than he wore it when in health, curled over the broad, white brow. The regular features had already settled, it seemed to her, into the peace of death.

For a few minutes the wife sat very still on her elevated seat, the restoratives within easy reach, the flame of the spirit lamp under the bubbling liquid turned to its lowest. Her mind, a vagrant wanderer, swept the past five years of her married life.

Two had been of ecstatic bliss—for with all her heart and soul, her jealous heart, her fiery soul, she had loved the man she married. The third had been clouded by the fear that his passion was dying, the fourth darkened by the certainty that her fears were realized, the last had been aflame with anguish and fury when she knew that he had, for two years, been absorbed, at intervals with Marion Beresford. Marion, younger than herself, beautiful, brilliant, intellectual, a woman who laughed at convention, yet of whom the world spoke kindly. One man, she remembered, had called the lovely and daring young widow a reincarnation of Aspasia! And Eleanor, who was not mentally endowed, whom books other than the lightest fiction bored, had grown to know that whole tracts of her husband's mind were unexplored, as far as her researches went—that he knew things, thought of things, was interested in things whose very names were meaningless to her ears.

Once, she had been content that her beauty enthralled him. Now, she was jealous of his thoughts.

His illness had given her a ferocious joy. His mistress could not penetrate the fastnesses of the home of her lover's wife. From the day on which the

epidemic had smitten him down, he had been her own, her very own. The nurse first chosen had been dismissed on a clumsy pretext because she had been professionally authoritative and had tried to bar the wife on the plea that her visits sent up the patient's temperature! The little one who had finally pleased her was less experienced, more docile.

And now, with the night falling about her, with the doors closed, he was her own—while he lived.

Of his death, she thought quite calmly. A grave that she could visit daily, that she could keep beautiful with flowers, making it a monument to her own devotion—that would be peace, almost bliss, compared to the Dejanira robe of flame in which she would see his first convalescent strength employed—to call on Marion Beresford! No, she was determined. She had saved the officious little nurse from subjecting her to that renewal of torture. A flame swept over her at the thought of Marion, watching for his car, Marion, flying down the steps to meet him, Marion, drawing him with both hands into her flower-filled room, and inducting him into her deepest chair, Marion, offering restoratives, Marion, smiling, kneeling beside him, lifting her face—!

The wine and the extract under her hand should remain untouched. The painless passing that meant peace to him, and to her own soul, should not be interfered with, nor delayed. But, that the little blue-eyed nurse might not suspect, the alcohol in the lamp should burn itself out, and, when the gray morning dawned, she would throw away the beef tea and the right quantity of champagne. To know just what that quantity should be, she must, every thirty seconds, pour out half a teaspoonful, and put it into the glass.

The night was cold, but the furnace was, of course, kept going, and an

even temperature secured for the sick room. It was now half-past eleven. She turned to the bottle of champagne, and poured out half a teaspoonful.

Slowly, as she was about to put this into the glass, she was aware that an impulse, as much beyond her control as her comprehension, guided her hand away from the glass, and to the sick man's lips. With no volition of her own, she forced the pointed spoon between them and the drops of wine down his throat.

The terror that her doing this brought about her, made her replace the spoon on the tray. She took off her wrist watch and laid it beside the spoon. Why—why—had she done this?

"Oh, but if I do give him a few drops of each, I can say, with my eyes meeting any one's," she was thinking of the eyes of the little nurse, "that I did—did—try!"

The thirty seconds had gone by in the removing of the watch, and the concurrent reasoning. She took another spoon and administered a few drops of the beef extract.

When five minutes had gone, she said:

"That is enough. Not—any—more!"

Yet, at the exact moment called for by the little nurse's schedule, she found herself automatically pouring the wine and giving it to the unconscious man! And, at the next swiftly recurring thirtieth second, the extract.

"I will not do it! I will not do it!" she told herself. Her heart was pounding against her side, the sweat was on her brow. By every physical law she knew, her hands should have been shaking so that the power to guide the spoon, its contents unspilled; would not have been hers. But it was not so. As though controlled by some external and invisible force, her white fingers closed round the champagne bottle and carefully measured the prescribed quantity

into the spoon, as carefully conveyed the wine to her husband's lips, which, as she saw now, had lost a little of their death-like whiteness and rigidity.

She felt her very soul quailing within her at this failure of volition. At the same moment, some section of her intelligence marvelled that the thought of Robert's return to her aroused no feeling whatever, either of the joy that would have been natural, or of the resentful fear of his again leaving her for Marion Beresford. She had not been entirely rendered dumb, since she was terrified of the control possessing her, but some tracts of feeling were devoid of sensation now—*why and how?*

All the time she wondered and reasoned, and feared and struggled—so vainly—for power to resist, to repossess herself—her hands were moving swiftly, unerringly, conveying life to the dying man. At one o'clock he drew a deep, easy, natural breath. At half past he turned upon his side, away from her, and then turned back.

Suddenly a light came to her.

The little nurse!

She had prepared so eagerly for this vigil, she had so entreated, with her blue eyes, for this task, she had been so disappointed when sent away!

"I will ring for her. I will ask how she dare—"

Eleanor gave the half spoonful of wine. This took longer than the extract of beef which she had merely to dip up from the silver saucepan on the spirit stove. The movements of lifting the bottle, and pouring the wine, occupied at least twice as many seconds. She waited till she had performed the easier task, then rose to go to the bell which would wake the nurse.

She had just reached it, when she felt an impulse turning her round. The bell should have been near the bed, and, when the furniture stood in its normal position, was near it, but Robert

had insisted on having his head to the north, and so the bed had been moved. Thus, Eleanor had to traverse the long room before she could put her fingers on the little mother-o'-pearl button. She did not reach it before she was—*sent back*—and found by her watch it was time for the wine again!

She had moved too slowly, too cautiously, as if afraid of something. She must wait, and give the extract, and then—go quickly.

Twice she essayed and failed. The third time she pressed the button hard, and returned to her post on the second.

But the nurse, usually so alert, so wakeful, did not respond. It was as if the universe slept.

Terror uncontrollable urged her heart to fast and furious beating, drenched her body in the sweat of fear. Only her hands and arms, seemingly no part of her own mechanism, detached from it, and obedient to something not herself, only her hands and arms never ceased their tireless ministrations.

And those ministrations were becoming more and more effective. The sick man's breathing was deep and easy, a faint color came, in order, to lips, to nostrils, to cheeks. A light perspiration bedewed his forehead, and once he flung his hands out upon the coverlet.

He would live!

The little nurse had saved him, in spite of his wife!

Through the drawn back curtains, the first pale gray of dawn dimmed the morning stars. Turning her head in the brief intervals of her tending, Eleanor knew that another day was born.

And then, suddenly, whatever had been her master in this strange task,

left her. Her hands fell to her sides, numb, powerless. She felt that she would faint, that life itself was leaving her.

She looked around for help, but no help was near. The light, pale still, was yet the light of morning.

She heard her husband stir. She saw his eyes open, his lips move. She waited in anguish—for she was once again herself—lest his first words should be for another.

Instead, he whispered faintly.

"Eleanor?"

She leaned over to him, tears pouring from her eyes, the old tenderness welling up in her heart. The door opened and the little nurse came in, fresh, alert, with coffee on a silver tray.

"Oh, Mrs. Calhoun—oh!"

For she had seen the miracle.

"If he had died," she whispered, trembling, "I should never have taken another case! For I heard your bell, Mrs. Calhoun, and *I was too tired to move*—think of that, for a nurse! I could *not* move!"

Whatever she had done, then, had been done unconsciously.

That was Eleanor's last thought, as darkness closed about her.

* * * *

Eleanor had left Robert to the little nurse, and was taking time to read the papers gathered since the beginning of his crisis. As her eyes fell on one, her heart seemed to miss a beat:

"DIED: On Thursday night, at half-past eleven, Marion, widow of the late John Beresford, at her residence, The Damozel, Riverside Drive. Kindly omit flowers."



She Had to Play the Lead

By William Grenvil

PART II

SYNOPSIS OF FIRST PART

Mory Gray, a country girl in New York who wants to become a movie actress, has come to the end of her resources. Wandering along Fifth Avenue one evening, a well-dressed woman accosts her and engages her to play in some amateur theatricals at her home. Mory is taken by the woman and her husband, who call themselves Mr. and Mrs. Von Horne, to a great country estate. There she finds they are criminals and want her aid. As she cannot escape she has to listen to them. They want her to impersonate the celebrated movie star Rita Duval and induce a millionaire who has fallen in love with her on the screen to give her enough money to start her own producing company. The two crooks say Mory may even have to marry Rufus Green.

BUT I don't want to play such a part," Mary protested.

"You got to," Nell Schirmer said, and there was a menace under her seemingly

friendly attitude.

"But that would be dishonest," she cried, "it would be obtaining money under false pretenses. I won't do it!"

"Come, come," said Steve puffing at his cigar, "that won't get you nowhere. This ain't the first time you've got things under false pretenses."

"I've never done such a thing in my life," she declared indignantly.

"Wait a bit," said Steve, "what about beating Mrs. O'Ryan out of four weeks' board and lodging?"

"That was different," she asserted.

"Not a bit," he said, "the judge would look at it in the same way and it would be the good old Island for thirty days."

"How did you know about it?" she asked.

"I was looking for a ringer for Rita Duval and I saw you on the street. I

marked down your house and went and told Nell. Then I got the Van Horne sedan and was coming to talk it over when Mother O'Ryan threw you out. She didn't whisper it."

"If I did what you want me to, I should go to prison."

"You'll go if you don't," he snapped grimly. "If you play under my direction you can't go wrong. This fellow Rufus Green is no good anyhow. He's a get-rich-quick crook and it would be a kind action to take some of his dirty dough."

"But you said I might have to marry him!"

"What's a fake ceremony between friends?" he said easily. "That guy isn't playing straight. I happen to know he hasn't got his divorce yet. I dearly love to skin that sort."

Mary Gray looked at the twain in despair. Why was it they persisted in thinking she would enter such a shameful scheme with them? Steve went on genially:

"You know what a hard game life is even if you're willing to work like a

slave. What we offer you is ten thousand dollars, or maybe more, for less than a week's easy work. He shan't pull any rough stuff with our darling daughter, shall he, mother? I'm your loving father," he added, "and you are our only joy."

"You needn't be afraid of Sam or Steve," Nell said quickly, as she saw a look of fear creep into the girl's face. "Sam hates the sex, and if Steve looks at a woman in a way I don't like he gets hell from me."

"What about it?" Steve demanded. "Are you going back to face your landlady's charge or are you coming in with us?"

"I shall go home to my uncle," she cried. No matter what harsh measures the judge might deal out, it would be better than remaining with these people, who wanted to use her as a tool and then have her for ever in their power. "He'll come and fetch me."

Steve looked at her in open admiration as she stood defying him. She was of middle height, slim, and her almond-shaped, red-brown eyes flashed fire. She was prettier, had she known it, than ever her idol Rita Duval could hope to be.

"There's things against that," he said slowly, "first, how is he going to know where you are? Will Mother O'Ryan tell him? Not a soul knows you are here, and not a soul will unless we tell them. Be sensible. If you only knew it, there's thousands would jump at your chance. Ten thousand for a week's work. That's Rita Duval's salary, and you wouldn't ask any better than that. Nell, you take her up to bed and tell her not to get up till she's told to."

"You are threatening me," she said, her face flushing.

"I'm taking care of my leading lady," Steve smiled. It seemed that he was certain she would neither escape nor fail to follow his directions.

Upstairs—three flights up—in a long, low room, thirty feet from the ground, she had plenty of sleepless hours to think matters over. She did not believe she was in danger so long as she followed instructions. But the thought of meeting this coarse Rufus Green, wheedling his money from him, and perhaps sealing the bargain with the intimacy of a forced marriage, was revolting. "Never," she said to herself, "Never."

She was essentially a lovable, romantic girl, waiting as all such do for the coming of the man of men. To him she would go willingly and proudly.

When she awoke from troubled sleep next morning she decided it would be best to offer no open rebellion to her jailers. Sooner or later there would come an opportunity to make a break for freedom. But before making it she must disarm suspicion. She was not allowed to go downstairs until noon. When she did she was surprised at the altered appearance of the place. Plate, linen, fine glass and china had been brought in from somewhere or other and electric light, water and gas were now installed. It was remarkable, she thought, that these crooks could have accomplished so much.

Nell Schirmer told her how it happened as they had lunch.

"Sam is the caretaker," she said. "He got the job in the nick of time. He beat up a policeman in Jersey City and had to keep out of sight. This place here used to get broken into regular by a gang of tough kids, but not with Sam on the job. Sam was welter weight champion once. Steve had a piece put in the papers that young Van Horne, who owns this, was coming home."

"Is he?" Mary demanded.

"He's shooting bears in Alaska," Nell told her. "That's all he does—shoots bears and tigers and lions. Steve fig-

CHAPTER II

ured it out that if that got in the papers we could get credit for eats and drinks from the stores in New York where the Van Hornes used to deal. It worked like magic. Say, the drinks would knock your eye out—champagne, port, Scotch, everything. They think Steve is his private secretary. That automobile you came out in has the Van Horne crest on it. Steve can imitate writing to beat the band. He—"

"You mean he can forge other people's writing," said Mary severely.

Nell was too good-tempered to resent the charge.

"It's a gift," Nell returned simply. "The electric light, water and gas people fell for Sam's imitation of young Van Horne's writing. We had to pay the help to scrub and clean up, but we got some useful pointers that way."

Mary Gray looked at her curiously.

"Don't you realize you are putting a lot of information in my way that I could use against you?"

The girl was again conscious of the ruthlessness of this easy-going, pleasure-loving Nell Schirmer. Of the two, she felt she would fear Steve less.

"I'm telling you because you are in on this trick. You've got to be. There's no risk. When it's over you just fade out and do what you like with the money you'll get. If you make a squeal you'll go to the Island and then the bulls will take you in whenever they feel like it. They'll come and look at you as you're doing your thirty days, and when they see you back in the city, they'll remember. Another thing, girlie, don't try to make a getaway. Sam ain't very good tempered. He never has been since Joe Walcott beat him up bad at Coney, so don't take any chances with him. And one thing more, we've got our friends on the outside, and they'd only bring you back here."

NELL's warnings did not deter the girl from watching her opportunity to escape. She felt if once she were the other side of the high stone walls she would find some good Samaritan. She was rested and strong and used to athletic sports. She doubted if Sam or Steve could catch her in a footrace.

When she found Nell unobservant she ran upstairs to see if from some high window she could get an idea of the lie of the land. She hoped to be able to see some nearby town, but all that was visible was hill and treetops.

She was making her way across the corridor to another room facing in a contrary direction, when, red-faced and angry at having to take so much exertion, Nell came puffing up the stairs.

"If Steve gets good and sore on you," Nell began, "you'll be sorry. You come down with me and begin to dress the part. She looked at Mary's clothes with scorn, "Rufus Green won't fall for you if you look like that. Rita Duval is the swellest dresser in the movies."

The first thought of rebellion was crushed when Nell gripped the girl's arm. The elder woman smiled a little as the girl's face bore tribute to her strength.

"Didn't think I was so strong, did you?" she smiled. "Well, dearie, when I met Steve I was a headliner in vaudeville in an acrobatic act." Nell went on talking as she piloted the other downstairs. "Did I tell you we had friends on the outside who'd bring you back if you got away?"

"Haven't you any pity at all?" the girl cried. "Do you suppose I want to let this man Green make love to me thinking I'm someone else?"

"Stuff!" said Nell. "Pity? Ain't I offering you more money than you'd make honestly in twenty years? He won't be here till tomorrow and we'll

see he behaves. Now, come and see the swell clothes you're going to wear. They'll be yours from now on," she added.

Said Nell a few hours later, when it was dark, "She's all right now, Steve. You should have seen her face change when she saw them clothes! She's got Rita faded off the screen for looks. This one is more class than Rita. Her uncle's a judge up-state. You've got to see that Rufus doesn't get too fresh."

"That'll be an awkward proposition," said Steve frowning. "From what I hear he has speed to him and ain't particular about his way of expressing himself. You see, Nell, we've got to see that he puts up the money and he won't do that unless she plays up to us. Bring her in. I've got to see she understands. I'm not going to have any failure when the biggest thing I ever went after is almost ripe. She's in deadly fear of getting her name in the papers and I'll throw a scare into her that'll make her eat out of my hand."

"My God!" cried Nell a half minute later, "she's gone! I'd a sworn she was in that next room!"

Steve rushed into the adjoining apartment with an oath. It was plain that she had sprung from the window to the shrubbery eight feet beneath.

Mary's pleasure at the sight of the beautiful clothes was perfectly genuine. All her life she had wanted just such lovely things. Yet much as she desired them the price to pay was too great. She was a romantic girl and wanted to be loved. But the idea of being forced into the arms of a sensualist like Green was too horrible. By this time she was too near hysteria to count the cost. As a siphon of aerated water diluted Steve's whisky with its sibilant sound she opened the window and jumped out unnoticed and unheard.

As she ran across the grass she heard

the opening door and the voices of Sam and Steve shouting. Blindly she rushed on, falling headlong over flower bed and sunken path, until the lovely clinging dress of blue charmeuse was torn and stained. And always the high stone wall for which she sought eluded her.

Sometimes the pursuers came within a few yards of her, flashing their lights, but failing to find her in the gloom. At last she came in sight of the great iron gates. But they were locked or fastened in such a way that she could not open them.

Behind her, coming fast down the drive, was the pattering of feet.

Looking over her shoulder she could see from the lights on the gate posts that it was Sam and that he was angry. The excitement, the fatigue attendant on her struggle and her fear of this swearing, angry beast almost upon her, made the girl for the first time in her life faint dead away.

Sam picked her up and took her nearer the light. It was on this frail girl that his hope of rich reward depended, and he had to stop himself from shaking her angrily as was his first desire.

"What's the trouble?" said a voice from the other side of the gates.

Sam looked up to see a tall man gazing at him, a man with a stern expression and the air of habitual authority.

"Mr. Green," he gasped, "we didn't expect you till tomorrow."

"You didn't," said the stranger. "Who are you and what's the matter with that girl?"

"She's just fainted," said Sam, trying to appear natural. "I'm Sam. I'm caretaker here, sir, but you're expected."

He unlocked the door and let the tall stranger enter.

As he did so, bearing the girl's weight easily on one arm, she recovered consciousness, and looked up to see a strange man staring at her with uncommon interest.

"Miss Rita," said Sam, with an exaggerated air of respect, "here's Mr. Rufus Green come a day before we expected him. Your paw and maw will be tickled." He turned to the other man,

"Mr. Green, sir, I don't have to introduce you to Miss Rita Duval, the Nonpareil star."

"No," said Mr. Green, removing his hat, "I have seen her a hundred times already."

He gripped her hand hard. Even in that moment of depression Mary was relieved to find him better looking than she had expected. From his reputation she imagined Green would be coarser, harder, less gentle. But, she reflected, a man with his looks and assumed manners would be all the more difficult to deal with. Could she, the girl wondered, lead him on to give money to this precious pair who held her in bondage? Or would she be able to make her escape before that dreaded moment?

"You must let me help you," Green said courteously, taking her arm.

"Thank you," she returned stiffly, "I am perfectly capable of walking."

"But you just fainted," he protested.

"That was from overwork," Sam interjected. "A star like Miss Duval has to work awful hard."

"I suppose so," said Mr. Green slowly.

"Indeed yes," Sam continued, evidently fearing the agitated girl would not keep up the deception sufficiently well. "That's why Mr. Duval and her mother want her to have her own company. Rita Duval is a big drawing card, as you know." Sam winked, but the darkness did the action. He did not let go of the girl's arm. She felt utterly powerless and hopeless, very weak and small and friendless. Her heroines on the screen would no doubt know how to act, but she was without inspiration. All she knew was that the conspiracy was involving her and the scene

she was to play was close at hand.

Only once in the long walk to the house did Green speak.

"You expected me tomorrow then?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Green," Sam answered. "You sent a telegram. Made good connections, I suppose?"

"That was it," the other man returned.

Sam would have liked to run on and warn his fellow crooks but he dared neither release the girl nor entrust her to Green. But it happened that Nell heard his voice, and seeing the tall man by his side guessed what had happened. They received Mr. Green with great cordiality. Again they assumed a different bearing and accent. They were no longer Nell and Steve, but the proud parents of a world famous star.

"My staff of servants has not yet arrived," Steve said, apologizing for the absence of his butler and maids.

Mr. Green looked about the great hall and noble stairways with marked interest. It was an impressive interior.

"What a splendid place!" he ejaculated. "Did I understand that you had bought it?"

"I'm considering it," Mr. Duval said pompously. "If Rita forms her own company and stays east I shall buy it for her. You will find your room comfortable, I hope."

"You insist on my staying then?"

"Absolutely," said Nell. "There's another member of the family who'll be disappointed too, if you don't." She looked across at her supposed daughter and Green followed her gaze. "I guess you two have gotten friendly in your letters."

Green thought Rita's blush the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. But he said nothing for a moment. Instead he stood there frowning, and the two watching men, Sam and Steve, quaked a little at his silence. They were playing a risky game, and he might have

found out that this was a fake star they were displaying. But they had made certain precautions through their friends and confederates which minimized the chances of detection. Green was true to the descriptions they had received of him. He was a tall, red-haired man of great physical strength and imperious temper. But just as Mary Gray feared him for his mask of kindness, so did this plotting trio because he did not show his hand. It was plain that the proposition must come from Steve. Like most rich men, Green would sit back and let the other fellow put his cards on the table.

"Good God, Nell," he said a little later after one of these long silences on Green's part, "I believe he's peeved because we don't leave him alone with the kid. What about it? Can you see she doesn't queer us?"

Nell was very kindly and sympathetic as she drew Mary to a corner and gave her some instructions.

"Evidently he wants to talk to you alone. Now don't you be nervous. If he starts to talk about your company tell him you leave all business to your father. All you do is live for Art. Rita had that in an interview I read only last week. You have got to look pretty. If you do what we want you'll be in luck."

For some reason or other Mr. Green behaved exceedingly well. That he admired her the girl knew instinctively. Men had looked at her with admiration long before Mr. Burke induced her to leave her home for a film career. Frankly, she was afraid of this man, who chose to show her the deference and chivalry that was not in his nature. If Steve thought his reputation bad there was no doubt about it. A dozen times she had heard him say that Rufus Green was a "bad actor."

The family, servants and guest retired early. Nell and Steve were grati-

fied to hear Green say that although he had known Rita Duval for a long time on the screen and in illustrated magazines, he had underestimated her charm.

The self-styled Rita smiled charmingly, but she avoided the intense, burning glance he threw at her as she went up the winding stairway. And she was angry that she could not find it in her heart to dislike him. But she knew that the men who had the greatest success with women never showed their true selves to their victims until too late. It wasn't fair, she told herself, that he should be the very type she had always admired.

"Now, Mr. Duval," said Rufus Green, looking at that smiling gentleman with scrutiny that was disturbing, "shall we talk business? I'm curious to know a great many things. These letters I wrote to your daughter, for instance—you must know a man can't remember everything he puts in things of that sort."

"But you meant 'em, eh?" said Steve.

"I mean everything I write," said Rufus Green.

"And you won't go back on your word?" Steve tried not to seem anxious.

"What I agree to do I carry out," said Green with a snap of his strong jaw. "Make your proposition, Mr. Duval."

Steve was a clever talker. It was his strongest asset. He proved conclusively that if Mr. Green backed his daughter in her own producing company the scheme would pay a hundred per cent. He talked with a fluency that was impressive. Evidently Mr. Green thought so, too, for he smiled.

"I'll sleep over it," he said at length.

CHAPTER III

WHEN Duval returned to the matter at breakfast he found the capitalist still enthusiastic.

"I want to talk it over with your daughter first," he said. "Let's go for a walk, Miss Rita. I want your ideas on it."

"Surely," said Mr. Duval, but feeling less confident than he seemed to be. Then he turned to Nell. "You take a walk with Rita and Mr. Green."

"I'm going to star Rita, not her mother," said the guest, smiling at the elder woman. "I want a little talk with your daughter first."

The look the twain gave to the girl plainly told her that if she betrayed them she would suffer. But Mary Gray was not of the soft, easily-welded metal they supposed. When she and Green were clear of the house on a little knoll among the pines, where was a rustic bench, she knew she was free at last from eavesdropping. She was white-faced as she turned to speak.

"This must go no further," she said.

"What mustn't?" he demanded.

"This farce," she said. "I'm not Rita Duval. My name is Mary Gray and I'm being forced to play this part in order to get your money. I don't know what they'll do to me, but I can't go through with this."

"Tell me the whole thing," he commanded.

When she had finished he put his arm protectingly about her. It was a tender, sympathetic action.

"Poor little girl," he said. "I haven't always lived as I might have done, and there are episodes in my life I wouldn't want to talk about, but I felt certain you were not what you pretended to be. Cheer up, Mary Gray. I'll think out a way to score on that hound Steve."

"I'm afraid of him," she said, looking up appealingly.

"I've dealt with worse than that kind," he returned. "I'm going to get you out of this, and I'm going to get you a real job so that you can pay Mrs. O'Ryan and not go home to the Judge.

Sam, prying on them as best he might, returned to tell his cronies that things were progressing finely. He had seen Green's arm go about the girl and had noted she did not shrink from him.

This promise sent Mary's spirits up and she lost the look of fear. Never had the man seen so attractive a girl.

He amazed her presently by speaking of the real Rita Duval.

"I knew you were a fraud," he said, "because I happen to know her chief camera man and met him at Chicago two days ago. Rita was on the same train headed for Hollywood. I saw her."

"Why didn't you say so?" she demanded.

"I thought it would be interesting to find out just how far those precious scoundrels would go."

"What will you do?" she demanded. There was still the fear of Steve the ruthless, of the strong-armed, smiling Nell and the sullen, vindictive pugilist.

"See how far they go," he replied. "If they think they will get a cent of Rufus Green's millions, they'll be mistaken."

"They are dangerous," she said. "Suppose they hurt you."

"You are right," he said a little somberly. "They are very dangerous. I can see that, and if they suspect you and me, it might get uncomfortable, especially as they probably suppose I carry a pretty big roll with me. I'll tell you what we must do to be safe."

"What?" she asked with interest.

"Be quite friendly and give the impression that you liked those love letters I'm supposed to have sent you?"

"Didn't you send them?" she queried.

"But not to you, alas," he answered. "You mustn't mind if I take your arm. It will please them."

"You think so?" she said doubtfully. It would never do to let him think the idea was not a bit displeasing to her.

"Surest thing you know," he cried enthusiastically. "Don't turn around but I can see your fake father and mother coming through some trees. If you want to disarm suspicion don't make a scene when I do this."

"But I didn't say you could kiss me," she cried.

"It was the only thing to do under the circumstances," he said smiling down at her in a way that set her heart beating faster.

"Oh, you young people!" exclaimed Nell, cheerily, a minute later.

Steve was enchanted at the readiness with which Rufus Green agreed to his proposition after lunch. It was all right, said the amorous financier. He had long admired Rita Duval and a quarter of a million he had cleaned up on silver recently could be devoted to no better investment. Tomorrow he would put the deal through.

"Champagne," said Steve loudly, "Sam bring in a magnum. We've got to drink to success."

It was an hilarious meal. Rufus Green was smiling constantly. All his sombre reserve had fallen from him. Steve had yet a very difficult corner to negotiate. It was well enough to have Rufus Green declare he would invest but the difficulty was to have the investment made in a way he, Steve, could profit by. To go to New York and talk to Green's lawyer was no part of Steve's plan. There wasn't a chance that such a scheme would go by undetected. Steve wanted a nice certified check. In order to get it he had long ago determined to sacrifice Mary Gray if the thing became necessary.

That Green was behaving well now was no criterion that he would continue to do so. Steve concluded that Green was drinking next to nothing because he was between two "periodic souses" as he explained to Nell. "From what I

hear, when he breaks out he's a holy terror. That's why I'm keeping whisky away from him until we know where we stand."

"Suppose he don't come across?" asked Nell who, when she could not understand a man, was afraid of him.

"His roll would choke a hippopotamus," Steve smiled. "He ain't had much chance to spend it here. What'n 'ell's that?" he demanded as there was the imperious tooting of an automobile horn outside.

"Sam must have left the gates open," Nell frowned, as the ex-prize fighter hurried quickly to the door.

When Sam came back to the room his face was contorted with rage. He looked at Mary and the capitalist so wrapped in one another's society that they had heard nothing of the machine on the gravelled drive outside.

"I'd like to announce," said Sam loudly, "Mr. Rufus Green."

Mary, glancing up now with as much eagerness as the others, saw a big, burly man flushed of face and slightly swaying as he leaned against the lintel of the door. It was a red-haired man with a heavy, freckled, sensual face. He had eyes for none but Rita and came toward her with outstretched arms. As she shrank back the first Mr. Green, fists clenched, rose to his feet. The two men glared at one another. Every moment Mary feared they would spring at one another's throat.

"What's this?" Steve cried.

"That's the real Green," Sam said pointing to the last comer, "and the other feller's a fake."

"Who's a fake?" the red headed giant demanded angrily.

"I am," said the other man. "They thought I was you. Until I'd seen you I thought it was a joke. Now I think it's an insult."

"You did, did you?" said Steve, his thin lips like a gash in his pale face.

"I'll show you something that'll stop you from playing that game with me again as long as you live."

Sam said nothing. He was a silent fighter but he lined up beside his friend. As for the real Rufus Green he had understood little of what was going on. But what he did see plainly was that the Rita Duval who attracted him with terrific intensity was clinging to this tall, straight stranger as if she loved him, certainly as if his safety was dear to her. For her oldtime admirer she had no look but one of loathing. With a roar like a beast of prey he sprang forward.

"Wait a moment," said the masquerader coolly, "This thing has gone far enough. Now it's my turn."

But the time had gone by for him to stay their fury with wait. There were three balked, furious, violent men against him and murder looked out of the eyes into which he gazed courageously. But he had seen too much violence, and fought too often, not to realize that unarmed as he was and further handicapped by this clinging girl, he could do nothing against them.

As Steve made a grab at him the masquerader allowed himself time for one blow. Not only did it knock Steve down but it swept Sam into the path of the lumbering giant and delayed their attack for a few blessed moments.

"Come," he said to the girl. Grasping her wrist he turned and sprang up the three steps that led from the dining room to the main hall.

The pursuers were close at his feet as he made for the stairway. Then along a corridor at racing speed he dragged the girl.

"If we get to that door ahead," he whispered, "we'll be safe."

Even in that moment of desperation Mary thought how foolish it was to suppose they could hold out against the other three men with but the barrier

of a door between them. However strong it could be battered down in a few minutes.

He bolted it against the shouting men with a split second of time to spare. She was amazed that at a moment like this he could smile. But there he stood chuckling like a boy. He even took her in his arms and after a kiss dragged her unwilling feet in a few steps of a dancing measure.

Then he did an even more amazing thing. It was a big, bare room in which they were with three long windows. One of these he opened. Then he came to an open fireplace, boarded up. On either side of it was a pillar supporting a carved wooden overmantel. She wondered why he kneeled beside one while those outside were shouting to Nell to bring them an axe.

She saw the reason when suddenly the panel behind the pillar swung back and disclosed a dark, brick-lined passage. Quickly he pushed her into it and the darkness told her the panel had closed again.

"I must carry you," he whispered.

It seemed they must have traversed hundreds of yards in these dark bowels of the old house, stooping all the time to avoid the roof of the passages, when suddenly he stood straight up. Lighting a match Mary could see she was in a brick chamber some ten feet square. On a shelf was a candle. When it spluttered into light she could see that there was a plain table and two old chairs. It was amazing.

"What is this?" she demanded.

"It's a place where the Tories were hidden in the Revolution," he told her. This house was built by Sir Richard Chester who had a grant of land from the English king. His grandson was hidden in this very chamber for months while Westchester County was searched for him."

"You are sure they won't find us

here?" she said. The girl was still trembling from fear and excitement.

"Certain," he said firmly, "we are as safe here as Colonel Chester was."

"But we don't want to stay here for months," she returned dismally.

"You won't have to," he comforted her. "When you feel all right we can go down some steps and come out in an old cow barn that is never used. Then we can watch our opportunity to cut through the woods to a side road that leads to Brewster. I can get you away from here a dozen ways and all of them safe ones."

She looked at him wonderingly.

"How is it you are so much at home here and know all these secrets?"

"You see the place belongs to me," he said. "I'm the last of the Van Hornes. My great-grandmother, who was born a Chester, brought it to us."

By tortuous ways, through dark passages and cobwebbed doors, Mary at last saw through a chink in the shingles of the barn the little path that led to safety.

When they could see and hear nothing of the pursuers they made their way through the pines to the main road.

In the train to the city he told her a great deal about himself. That it was by accident he chanced to come to the old place on that particular day. He had not been near it since he was a schoolboy. When Sam, who had been engaged by the New York agent, had addressed him as Mr. Green and he had seen that his house was occupied by invaders he determined to find out the reason. Mary herself could take up

the threads from that until now they were nearing the city.

"What's going to happen to you?" he demanded.

A look of misery came into her eyes. But she felt she could not ask help from him. The comedy was finished. Their play-acting was over. She would not let him see how helpless she was.

"I shall get along all right," she said with an attempt at lightness.

"No you won't," he said, "you're miserable, Mary. You're afraid of yourself. You dread trying to hunt up a job. You dread going to your uncle and saying you've failed. You can't think of Mrs. O'Ryan without thinking of the police. Confess I'm right."

"If you are why are you so cruel as to remind me of it?"

"Because you've forgotten I promised to give you a real job."

She looked so troubled that his heart ached for her.

"Why did you forget it?" he persisted.

"You didn't mean it," she said dejectedly.

"There's a lot of hard work attached to it," he told her.

"I'd welcome it," she cried, "the harder the better. Do you really think you could help me to a position?"

"You might not accept it," he said.

"But I will!" she exclaimed. "Just give me a chance."

He sighed. "Splendid, Mary, and I did so dread proposing."

"Proposing?" she repeated.

"Don't you understand," he smiled, "that you've accepted me?"



The Sting of Victory

By Paul Vernier



"H," sighed McManner, sadly, "she has the hair and eyes of Nellie McNalligan, and she eats like Nellie used to eat."

For an active detective he was growing very stout, and he glanced sorrowfully from his own grapefruit salad and lemon ice, allowed by his diet, to the succulent steak and mushrooms of the black-eyed brunette across the way.

I suspected that a story was lurking in the offing. McManner had enjoyed the show that night and had heartily indorsed the judgment and valor of the indefatigable hero, who, like himself, was a detective.

"Yes," said McManner, "that girl reminds me of Nellie McNalligan, and that reminds me that the victor doesn't always get the spoils."

"Now that fellow in the show to-night," said McManner, knitting his brows, "got some reward for his work, and right there he differed from me when I courted Nellie McNalligan."

"You see," he began, as he lit a long, black cigar, "there was a fairly good counterfeit nickel being floated down in Lawrence County, and we had traced the source down to Greenvale."

"The force was pretty busy those days, and so the Chief sent me out on the job all on my lone. It was the first time I had been given a free hand in a case of any importance, and I worked like a Trojan."

"In a week or so, working day and

night—like a kid does—I had the case narrowed down to a restaurant building on Main Street, with offices on the second floor and apartments above.

"I recognized the restaurant proprietor at the first glance, without entering his place. He was a Greek, Popiklos by name, and I knew that he would remember me if he saw me, for we used to see each other every day when I lived in Altoona and he ran a place there.

"Well, rather than put another fellow on the job, I decided to adopt a good disguise and carry the thing through myself. I was thinner in those days than I am now, and I made myself up to look like one of these Spanish or French dukes, you know—goatee, mustache, black hair, olive complexion—see?"

"As John McManner I simply vanished from that town, reappearing as Pierre Gaspin, interested in starting a restaurant."

"My first week's work had made me pretty sure that the Greek was the ring-leader of the gang. Three others of his fellow countrymen had been assisting in passing the bad nickel, but investigation of the rooms in their boarding houses disclosed nothing. They seemed to have no room to set up any machinery in private, while Popiklos, the Greek, on the other hand, had two stories and the basement of the restaurant building in which to work."

"But the very first night I stepped inside that restaurant I almost forgot all about my case. Nellie McNalligan herself brought my ham and eggs that night, and if there ever was a pretty

Irish girl it was Nellie. Black hair, saucy blue eyes, and a dimple in her cheek when she laughed—that was Nellie. I liked Nellie—and Nellie seemed to like me—from the very first.

"From that night on I took all my meals at the Popiklos Restaurant, and late each night I would drop in for a hunch and then see Nellie home. I didn't like to let Nellie know that I was a detective right away. Some way, I felt it might frighten her, and then she might think me a poor proposition to tie up to—a detective having to lead a fairly roving life, you know.

"So I just dawdled along for a couple of weeks, reporting progress back to the Chief in my weekly statements—and real "progress" I was making, too—and finally, one night I put the question squarely up to Nellie and she said she would be mine.

"I was the happiest man in Greenvale that night, but after I got back to my room I pulled myself up short and said, 'Look here, old man, you've been letting this case hang fire while you courted this girl. Get busy now and do something on the job!'

"So I apprised Nellie of the nature of my occupation, which she took quite calmly, and began to question her in real earnest, and from points I got out of her I decided the little mint was in the basement. The proprietor, Popiklos, spent a lot of time down there with his visitors, and while they pretended they were drinking, the party never were really intoxicated.

"I made arrangements to change my room to one across the street, which only meant carrying my suitcase a couple blocks, and Nellie agreed to put three catsup bottles in a row in the front window whenever the Greek went out and conditions were favorable for me to examine the basement.

"The very first afternoon after I had changed my lodging place, what does

Nellie do but come to the window and give me the signal, and over I went to the restaurant.

"Nellie was the only waitress on the job at the time, and the cooks being spooning with some policemen, she guided me down into the basement with no one the wiser.

"I didn't have to look long to find the coining apparatus. 'Way back in the rear, under some storeboxes, there she was, fine as anything. I tell you I felt a glow of pride. I had found my prey! The quarry was in my hands!

"I was as tickled as a kid detective naturally would be over pulling off a stunt like that. In the pride of victory I jerked off my wig, mustache and goatee, and says I, 'Nellie, you see before you John McManner, some day the world's greatest detective,' just like that.

"Nellie threw up her hands, like this, and 'Oh, My Gawd!' she cries, with a gasp, she was that surprised and dumfounded at the change I had made. 'This is the last of Pierre Gaspin,' says I, 'and tonight I'll be back as myself, John McManner, and pull a single-handed pinch that will make the natives open their eyes.' And out I went, to be gone before the Greek got back and suspected something.

"About nine o'clock that night, when I saw Popiklos was in his restaurant, I shoved a couple of loaded Colts into my pockets and a brace of handcuffs and walks into Popiklos' place big as life, with the town constable for an aide.

"Popiklos stared when he saw me: he knew me right away. 'Hello, McManner,' he cries, 'how are you, and what will you have?' Nellie was standing right there to see me pull the final act.

"'I'm sorry, Popiklos,' says I, shoving the two Colts into his face, 'but I'll

have you? You're wanted for counterfeiting!

"He threw up his hands without any hesitation. 'But,' says he, 'you're all wrong, McManner: you've got the wrong man.'

" 'We'll see about that,' says I, and turns him over, handcuffed, to the proud town constable. Well, I got a couple young fellows that were in the restaurant to go along as witnesses, and went down cellar to get the molds and stuff.

"By George, they weren't there! We looked and we looked, and spent nearly three hours going over the basement, the restaurant and the third floor of that building, but not a solitary thing could we find. Then we searched all the offices on the second floor, and finally went around and looked up the lodging-places of the other three Greeks. Everything was as innocent as a new-born babe.

"It was about half-past three by that time, and I felt like a fool. I dragged myself back to the restaurant, where the sleepy constable was still holding Popiklos, and let him release the Greek. What else could I do? I thanked the stars Nellie wasn't there to see the climax.

" 'Very well, Johnny, my boy,' says I, when I got back to my room, 'you've

lost the case, but you've got the finest wife in Lawrence County by it. We'll just take the bride-to-be down to Washington and make a clean breast of it to the chief.'

"So next morning I hunted up Nellie, bright and early, and 'Nellie,' says I, 'sweetheart, we'll just run over to Washington tonight and get the knot tied. It looks as though it were all over here on this case. Something went wrong.'

" 'If you mean it's all over for you,' says she, 'you guessed right, for I'll have nothing to do with men that run around with false faces breaking an honest girl's heart with their sham good looks, and then try to take the bread out of her mouth by having her employer hung for his patriotism.'

" 'Patriotism,' says I, 'the man's a counterfeiter, Nellie.'

" 'He is not,' said Nellie. 'He told me he was making medals for our soldiers in the Spanish War, and I'd sooner believe him than a false villain like yourself.'

McManner sighed deeply, and looked again at the brunette on the other side of the café.

"What became of Nellie?" I asked.

"She married Popiklos," said McManner, sadly.



Do You Know?

By Arthur Bowie Chrisman

MARRIAGES are made in Heaven,
So the young declare;
Yes, Marriages are made in Heaven—
Only knows just where.

Excuses We Have Never Heard

By Otis C. Little



time."

'M late this morning, sir, simply because I rolled over and took another nap after the alarm went off."

"Sorry I wasn't home for dinner last night, dear, but I ran across a couple of old pals of mine and we all went out for a

"I'd have been on time for this appointment, old man, but I knew you'd be late anyway."

"Sorry I can't accommodate you, old chap, but I know you'd never return the ten."

"Yes, Your Honor, I was going forty all right, but I was only doing it to try and get away from the speed cop."



What Little Girls Were Made For

By H. Thompson Rich

LITTLE girls were made to hold
By horrid savage men and bold.

Little eyes were made to see
Beauty under savagery.

Little lips were made to feast
And soothe and calm the savage beast.

Little arms were made to press
Tighter still the lips' caress.

Little breasts were made to lay
Savage heads upon and pray.

Little girls were made to share
Savage triumph and despair.

"Till Death Us Do Part"

A Play in One Act

By Hilliard Booth

CHARACTERS

JIM RAXTER

LEM HAMILTON

MAY ALLISON

GRANNY ALLISON

THE rising curtain shows the clean but crude interior of a cabin on Little River in the Blue-ridge mountains of North Carolina. The entrance door is at one side; opposite this is the door to the only other room of the house. Beside it is a fire-place. At rear is a small window and a closet just large enough for a man to squeeze into.

A table, chairs and a bureau compose the furniture of the room. On the table stands a new straw suit-case, partly packed. It is noon of a day of the present.

GRANNY ALLISON is helping her grandchild, MAY, fill the suit-case. GRANNY is a bent and withered but vigorous old lady of eighty years, dressed in drab-color homespun. MAY is a fresh and unusually pretty girl of eighteen years wearing her first white silk dress.

GRANNY:

I can hear the folks down by the falls; hit's almost time now, May.

MAY:

Where's my red scarf?

GRANNY:

Hit's in the bed-room. I always thought you'd marry a likelier man than Jim Raxter.

MAY:

This suit-case'll never hold my things.

GRANNY:

Jim's a steady worker and I reckon he'll make you a good husband, but I looked for you to marry a fancier man,

May. And hit don't seem like you had the true bride-spirit!

MAY:

Have you got the tables spread, Granny?

GRANNY:

I'll see about 'em directly. There's a crowd of folks to feed; seems as if the whole district had come to see the wedding under High Falls. That was a pretty idea of yours, being married under the falls, May—hit's like being married in the lap of God. I never did hold for house-weddings. But I always thought you'd marry Lem Hamilton.

"Till Death Us Do Part"

MAY:

What made you think that?

GRANNY:

Lem liked you for sure, and you went together a lot. What made you turn Lem down?

MAY:

There wasn't any question of marriage between Lem and me, Granny.

GRANNY:

His leaving the district so sudden made folks think you'd jilted him. But I reckon folks knows *now* why Lem left these parts!

MAY:

(*Alarmed.*) You think they know?

GRANNY:

Yes. Porter Creasman's girl met up with an accident; she give her parents an unlooked for grandchild. They say that Lem's the man.

MAY:

That's a lie!

GRANNY:

You seem mighty certain!

MAY:

Lem never cared for that frump of a Creasman girl!

GRANNY:

Why did he go away, then?

MAY:

Why do you look at me like that? How do I know? Why do you ask me?

GRANNY:

There, there; I reckon hit's getting married that makes you so easy upset. Here's Jim.

(JIM RAXTER enters at the house-door; he is a heavy-set, stolid-looking young mountaineer wearing a suit of homespun.)

RAXTER:

Preacher's coming over the river, May, and half the county's waiting on us at the foot of the falls. Ready?

GRANNY:

That preacher can just wait till I get my tables spread! Half the county! Hit'll be the biggest wedding ever seen on Little River!

(*She hurries out through the house-door, filled with importance.*)

RAXTER:

Give us a kiss, sweetie.

MAY:

(*Avoiding him.*) Time enough for foolishness after we're married.

RAXTER:

A life time for hit! Seems like a miracle, you're marrying me, May! You could have picked the best of us, and you took me! I can't figure hit out, unless hit's because I love you with a love that's just *reached* for you ever since I first set eyes on you five years ago. I'd never have married if I couldn't have married you. And now I've won you, I'm going to *keep* you, till death us do part!

(*He nears her; his deep feeling apparent in voice and face. MAY moves quickly away from him.*)

MAY:

I don't like the look in your eyes, Jim!

RAXTER:

(*Stops and then laughs shortly.*) You're not aiming to marry a *dummy*, are you? Well, I reckon I can wait till after the preacher makes us man and wife. *Wife!* And to think I used to be jealous of Sam and Dal and Lem! At one time I thought you and Lem were sure going to make a match of hit.

MAY:

They say Porter Creasman's girl's in trouble.

RAXTER:

Yes. Now we know why Lem lit out for foreign-parts!

MAY:

Lem's not the man!

RAXTER:

Don't you believe it! Lem was one of them pretty boys that could pull the wool over any girl's eyes! What did he clear out for if hit wasn't to save his skin and single-blessedness?

MAY:

How do I know? Why do you ask me?

(GRANNY enters at the house-door.)

GRANNY:

Get me that last plate of sandwiches from the closet, Jim. From talk I heard I reckon the boys is going to play some trick on you.

JIM:

Going to try to kidnap me, are they, like they did Tom Yancey! They held him for a ransom of kisses from the bride, and delayed the wedding two hours; while the preacher filled in the time with a surprise-marriage and two baptisms! Well, they don't get Jim Raxter; and no one but Jim Raxter gets any kisses from you, May.

(He takes the plate of sandwiches from the closet at rear and gives it to GRANNY.)

You'll find me waiting on you at the Falls, bride of mine!

(He goes out through the house-door.)

GRANNY:

If you see them Slater girls going heavy on the cake, tell 'em hit's bad luck to eat more than one piece of wedding-cake, or there won't be enough to

go round. That suit-case is as full as you can get hit, May.

MAY:

There's my red scarf to go in yet.
(She goes into the bed-room. Boys' voices are heard from outside calling. JIM RAXTER runs in at the house-door.)

RAXTER:

The boys tried to trap me, but I gave 'em the slip! There'll be no two hour delay to this wedding. Head the boys off, Granny!

(He squeezes himself into the closet at rear and closes the door. GRANNY speaks through the open house-door as the voices of the boys are heard near-
ing.)

GRANNY:

Jim left the house just a bit ago, boys; I reckon he gave you the slip!

(She laughs and goes out through the house-door with the plate of sandwiches. The boys' voices are heard receding rapidly. MAY enters from the bed-room with a red scarf in her hand. As she crosses the room LEM HAMILTON enters at the house-door. MAY stops with a gasp as she sees him. LEM is a tall, good-looking and graceful young fellow with easy manners and a winning smile.)

MAY:

Lem!

HAMILTON:

I've come back for you, May!
(RAXTER sees HAMILTON as he enters, and starts to open the closet-door. As HAMILTON speaks RAXTER pulls the closet-door slowly shut and remains hidden.)

MAY:

This is my wedding-day!

HAMILTON:

Yes, and I'm the man you're going to marry!

MAY:

I'm going to marry Jim Raxter!

HAMILTON:

You're going to marry me; I love you, May!

MAY:

Is that why you ran away and left me?

HAMILTON:

I couldn't forget you. I thought of you by day and I dreamed of you by night. When I heard you were going to marry Jim Raxter, I knew you could never be anybody's wife but mine! I've come back for you!

MAY:

It's too late!

HAMILTON:

You don't love Jim!

MAY:

Jim's waiting on me at the foot of the falls with the preacher and half the county!

HAMILTON:

You belong to me!

(He nears her, but stops as the girl speaks with sudden fury.)

MAY:

Why don't you marry Porter Creasman's girl?

HAMILTON:

Why should I marry her?

MAY:

They say you're to blame for her shame!

HAMILTON:

That's an evil lie! I never went with the Creasman girl—I never cared for her!

MAY:

I knew it was a lie— Oh, I knew it!

HAMILTON:

Look here, May, what did you promise to marry Jim for?

MAY:

Jim asked me to marry him, and—!

HAMILTON:

You mean—?

MAY:

I'm not looking for shame like the Creasman girl's!

HAMILTON:

May!

(He takes her in his arms. MAY surrenders herself to the love she feels for him. She clings to him, sobbing.)

MAY:

What'll we do? What'll we do? Jim'll never give me up! How can I face Granny and all the people?

HAMILTON:

Why face them at all? We'll run away. I'll slip around by the upper trail and wait for you at the top of the falls. When Granny takes you down to the folks tell her you've got to go back to the house for something you forgot—and meet me at the head of the upper trail. I've got a horse and buggy at the fork of the roads. By the time Granny and the folks wake up to the fact that you've cut and run we'll be on the down train at Penrose!

MAY:

Yes, yes, that's best!

HAMILTON:

I'll take your suit-case.

MAY:

No, they might see you! I'll take hit.

HAMILTON:

Put this in it—in case anything goes wrong you can follow me to Penrose. Tickets for Greenville.

(*He takes two railroad tickets from his pocket and gives one of them to MAY. MAY puts it in the suit-case.*)

MAY:

You bought two tickets! You were mighty sure of me!

HAMILTON:

I had a right to be!

MAY:

Thank God you came for me, Lem—thank God you came!

(*She throws her arms about the man's neck and kisses him.*)

HAMILTON:

We'll be married in Greenville, and you'll never be sorry for it, I swear it! Quickly, now!

(*He looks off through the house-door. MAY begins feverishly to put the last things in the suit-case and to close it.*)

MAY:

This scarf won't go in.

HAMILTON:

Give it here, I'll put it in my pocket. (*He takes the red scarf and thrusts it in his pocket. MAY closes the suit-case and fastens it.*)

MAY:

I'll get my hat; I'll follow you right along.

HAMILTON:

I'll be at the top of the falls.

MAY:

I'll meet you there!

(*HAMILTON kisses her again and then hurries out through the house-door. MAY, happy, excited, runs into the bedroom. JIM RAXTER comes out of the closet at rear. He is breathing hard and his stolid features are white and drawn. He moves swiftly and silently to the table, opens the suit-case, removes the railroad ticket, then closes*

the suit-case again and fastens it. He hesitates a second as he looks toward the bed-room, then pulls himself together and goes out quickly through the house-door.

MAY re-enters from the bed-room, wearing a large lace hat adorned with flowers. *She is singing gayly. GRANNY enters at the house-door.*)

GRANNY:

My tables are spread and the preacher's waiting! And now you've got the true bride-spirit, May!

MAY:

Yes, now I've got the true bride-spirit! Oh, Granny, I'm the happiest girl on all Little River!

GRANNY:

Now I know you and Jim are going to be happy!

MAY:

I'm going to be the happiest wife in the world, Granny! I want you to remember I said hit.

GRANNY:

I reckon the boys didn't find Jim in the closet, did they?

MAY:

In the closet?

GRANNY:

Jim was hiding from the boys in the closet.

(*She goes up to the closet and opens the door.*)

No—he's gone.

MAY:

(*Her gayety falling from her like a cloak as sudden fear grips her heart.*)
When—when was Jim in the closet?

GRANNY:

A few minutes back. What's the matter, child, you're as white as a sheet!

"Till Death Us Do Part"

MAY:

Was he there when—; no, no, he couldn't have been, he *couldn't* have been!

GRANNY:

What's that?

MAY:

Where's Jim now?

GRANNY:

I reckon he's waiting on you at the foot of the falls. Come, May, hit's time for the marriage.

MAY:

Granny, I'm afraid—I'm afraid!
(*Her knees give way, she sinks trembling into a chair.*)

GRANNY:

I've heard of brides took like this at the last minute, but I didn't think you was one of them foolish kind, May.

(*From the distance sounds a scream followed by excited voices.*)

GRANNY:

Listen! What's that?

MAY:

Oh, God! (*She buries her face in her hands with a moan.*)

GRANNY:

Something's happened! Wait here, May!

(*She hurries out through the house-door. Voices are heard nearing. MAY rises and crosses toward the house-door, but courage and strength fail her. Mastered by terror she collapses into a chair by the door. GRANNY hurries in, distressed.*)

GRANNY:

May, May—a man's killed, killed on your wedding-day! Hit's bad luck, hit's a bad omen!

MAY:

Who—who—?

GRANNY:

Of all men hit's Lem Hamilton! He fell over the falls right down in front of all the wedding-party! He smashed his head on a rock. He was killed!

MAY:

Lem's killed—murdered!
(*She sways back and forth, moaning.*)

GRANNY:

Hit was an accident! He fell over the falls. He must have been coming back for the wedding, and hearing the folks down below he must have leaned over the falls and slipped. God help us, he fell over the falls right in front of all the wedding-party! He smashed his head on a rock. He was killed!

MAY:

(*Rising with the strength of sudden fury.*) *Where's Jim?*

(*JIM RAXTER enters at the house-door.*)

GRANNY:

May's all upset over this terrible accident! Poor Lem! Hit's a bad omen—better put off the wedding!

RAXTER:

Putting off a wedding's bad luck. Lem was nothing to May or me. We'll be married just the same. What do you say, sweetie?

(*MAY regards the stolid man with amazement, uncertain; their eyes do battle.*)

GRANNY:

A man's days are numbered, but God knows Lem Hamilton must have come back to these parts to do the right thing by the Creasman girl, for there was two railroad tickets to Greenville in his pocket.

MAY:

Two tickets?
(*She turns to the suit-case, throws it open and searches with nervous haste*

for the ticket which she put there. Her breath comes harder as she realizes the ticket is gone.)

GRANNY:

Two tickets and his wallet was all they found in his pocket.

MAY:

My scarf!

GRANNY:

Have you lost your scarf?

RAXTER:

(Unobserved by the others, removes the red scarf from his pocket and holds it out toward MAY.) I reckon this is your scarf, May.

(MAY recoils as she sees the scarf; she regards RAXTER with horror.)

GRANNY:

Yes, that's hit.

RAXTER:

I found hit on the floor.

MAY:

Where—where—; how did you get hit?

GRANNY:

Didn't you hear Jim say he picked hit up off the floor?

RAXTER:

Hit was lying right here by the chair.

GRANNY:

Will you be married to-day in the face of this terrible accident?

RAXTER:

That's for May to say!

(MAY breaks down sobbing at the table.)

GRANNY:

I'll see what the preacher thinks is best. God knows hit's a bad omen!

(She goes out through the house-door. MAY speaks with low vehemence as she checks her sobs and faces RAXTER.)

MAY:

You killed him! You killed Lem Hamilton! You threw him over the falls—you murdered him!

RAXTER:

You're out of your head, May!

MAY:

You followed him to the falls, you set on him and you threw him over the top! You killed him, you killed him, and I'll tell all the folks down there you killed him!

RAXTER:

Why should I kill Lem? Can you tell all the folks that?

(MAY shrinks away from him, fear replacing fury as she realizes her position.)

Lem came to his death by an accident. Too bad hit smashed in that pretty face of his! But you and me'll be married just the same.

MAY:

You think I'll marry you now?

RAXTER:

I think you had some reason for promising to marry me, and I reckon your feeling still holds good! You haven't got to marry me, have you?

(MAY's eyes fall before his; she sinks to a chair, trembling. GRANNY enters at the house-door.)

GRANNY:

Preacher says hit's best to go through with the wedding if we have the ceremony here in the house. Does that suit you both?

RAXTER:

Suits me, all right.

GRANNY:

How about you, May?

(MAY hesitates, unable to control her voice. Then she gives a quick nod.)

"Till Death Us Do Part"

GRANNY:

I'll tell the folks to come along!

*(She goes out through the house-door.
RAXTER leans over MAY to kiss her.
The girl springs to her feet.)*

MAY:

Don't touch me!

*(RAXTER puts his arms about her and
laughs shortly as she struggles against
him.)*

RAXTER:

You devil-cat!

*(He forces her arms to her side,
kisses her warmly and then releases
her.)*

MAY:

(White with fury.) I hate you, I
hate you, I hate you from the bottom of

my soul, with all the feeling there is in
me! I always will hate you!

RAXTER:

And I love you with a love that ain't
stopping at nothing this side of hell!
*(GRANNY enters at the house-door,
calling to the others.)*

GRANNY:

Come right in, folks, and see Jim and
May made one.

RAXTER:

Till death us do part!

*(He holds out his hand to MAY with
a grim expression on his stolid face.
MAY, white and still, takes her place by
his side. As the people are heard ap-
proaching the house,*

THE CURTAIN FALLS



Verse (*A la Alice*)

By Murray Leinster

IF things had happened quite my way,
We would not be in this café.

If you had not insisted on it,
I would gladly have foregone it.

But you announced an appetite
And said you always dined at night.

But you need not have ordered duck.
It's that that makes me out of luck.

So I must tell you I'm not able
To pay for what is on the table.

So when you've eaten all you want,
They'll throw us from this restaurant.

When Father Forbids

By Thomas Edgelow



ORBES COLLINS was forty-six. Joyce Collins was seventeen. Forbes Collins was rich—quite the richest man in Minerva, New York. Joyce Collins depended upon

her father for every cent that she spent. Forbes Collins was stoutish, middle-aged, blue-eyed and had a neat, fairish moustache and a clipped beard. Joyce Collins had hair that Willie Scott said was not hair at all but just an imprisoned sunbeam. Joyce Collins, still according to Willie, had no eyes at all—just twin lakes of sapphire blue. Joyce Collins was not fat—and certainly she was not thin—so she must have been just about perfect. At least, Willie swore that she was.

So there you have them—father and daughter, Forbes Collins and his only offspring, Joyce.

Again a difference between them: Forbes Collins was a widower, while naturally Joyce was unmarried. All the same, both of them were secretly contemplating marriage. Joyce wanted to marry Willie Scott, who was twenty-three and dark-haired and romantic and everything that Joyce adored. Then Forbes Collins secretly had his eye on that beautiful widow, Mrs. Townsend—Diana Townsend, who had just come to live in Minerva in a small house on Maple Avenue.

Then, besides Forbes Collins and his daughter, Joyce, and Willie Scott and Mrs. Townsend and everybody, there was Bertram Valentine, and he, too, played a part in it.

Bertram Valentine was tall—very tall. Thin he was—very thin—and (and here again we must look through somebody else's eyes, using Joyce's for a change)—Bertram Valentine was a caricature of a man, with a long, thin red beak of a nose—with a thin-lipped mouth and with great hands and feet that were freckled redly. His hair, which was thin on top, was sandy-red too, and Joyce hated him, just as much as her father liked and encouraged him.

For Forbes Collins was practically Collins' Trust Company, so naturally Forbes Collins both liked and appreciated money. And Bertram Valentine was making money with his biscuit factory that reared its hideous buildings on the outskirts of the little up-state city.

As for Willie, why Willie hated Valentine almost as much as he adored Joyce. To love and to hate was about all that Willie had to do. Quite recently he had returned to Minerva from one of the lesser known colleges and so far Willie had not determined what he wanted to do with his life—other than to love Joyce.

And then came an evening when the June moon was shining and the June roses were making everything fragrant. Forbes Collins presented himself at the door of Diana Townsend's cottage.

"Won't you come and stroll in my garden?" he asked. "There is a moon and it will be light enough to show you the flowers."

Leaving the house, Mrs. Townsend put one deliciously cool hand on Collins' arm and allowed him to pretend to show

her the way. As they came behind the house, suddenly Collins paused and pointed up to the windows above the garage. Mrs. Townsend looked up, and as the elder pair stood below, a match flared and Joyce was seen reposing in Willie's arms as he lit a cigarette.

Now the garage in the Collins home boasted a second story where the chauffeur-handyman-gardener could have been quartered, only the Collins factotum went home every night to his wife and children. So Joyce had introduced an old couch, a couple of ancient armchairs, and a curtain, and quite unknown to her father was in the habit of seeing Willie here.

"Come down! Come down, both of you at once!" bellowed Collins.

"What shall we do?" asked Willie with an uncomfortable feeling of chill running up and down his spine.

"What shall we do?" repeated Joyce. "Why, go down and talk to them. You can ask Dad if you can marry me." Putting her head out of the window, Joyce called sweetly: "All right, dear Papa, I hear your tuneful summons. Have patience and we will be with you."

She laughed mockingly, and presently Joyce and Willie emerged on the gravel path in front of the garage.

"Good evening Mrs. Townsend," Joyce said pleasantly. "Lovely night, isn't it? Don't run away. You may be good for Dad's temper—and Willie is just going to ask him if he can marry me."

"You absurd child!" Mrs. Townsend said indulgently, as she patted Joyce affectionately on the arm.

But Willie had gathered all the fortitude that he possessed, and in a kind of desperation he looked at Collins and said:

"Look here, Mr. Collins—I—Joyce—that is, we love each other—so how's

chances of you being a good sport and saying 'yes'?"

Collins glowered at him. However, Mrs. Townsend's presence was not without its influence.

"How's chances of me saying yes?" he queried disagreeably. "Pretty slim, my boy—pretty slim."

"But why?" demanded Willie hotly. "I love her—and she loves me."

"Oh, she does, does she?" Collins sneered. "That's very nice, isn't it? But how do you propose to support my daughter? You don't expect me to keep you, do you? I'll tell you what I'll do with you," he went on with a sidelong glance at Mrs. Townsend as though to call her to witness what an excellent "sport" he was. "I'll tell you what I'll do with you. You run off and show me that you can make money—I don't care how—that's for you to determine—but it's reasonable for me to expect you to show me the goods. If you can come to me—within the next few months—and show me that you have got hold of some real money—why, then—you can have my daughter."

"How much must I show you?" asked Willie eagerly.

"How much?" asked Collins thoughtfully. Then he laughed. "Look here, young fellow, you come to me within six months and show me twenty-five hundred dollars that you've gotten yourself—and the girl's yours! I'll give you a job in the bank and let you marry her. Is that fair enough?"

Willie was about to protest at the enormity of the task set him, when a sudden idea struck Joyce. It would be of little use to argue with her father. He had made a certain offer, so they had better conserve their energies to concentrate upon getting the fabulous sum he demanded!

"All right—Dad," she said quickly, "you're on—only don't back out and try and evade it when Willie comes through

with that twenty-five hundred. You think now that he can't do it—and I tell you that he can. At least, be a sport when it comes to a showdown."

"I have yet to experience a time when I have gone back on my word," Collins snapped at her. "Let the young fool produce twenty-five hundred dollars, that he's made himself, within six months—and you'll find I'll make good—and then much happiness he'll bring you!"

It was on the next afternoon, while Joyce was swinging lazily in the hammock on the porch, that Bertram Valentine came suddenly upon her.

"I saw you swinging there from the road," he said in what he imagined was an ingratiating way, "and I couldn't resist the temptation to stop the car and come in and see how you were."

"Thank you, I'm quite all right," Joyce said with all the chill of which seventeen is capable.

Joyce was perfectly well aware of how pretty she was, and she was intensely suspicious of this man since her row with her father during the dinner of the previous evening.

As for Valentine, he merely liked to flirt with any pretty girl with whom he came in contact.

"I wonder if you know how pretty you are?" blundered Valentine, little reckoning with the terrible wrath and the equally terrible rudeness of seventeen.

"Supposing I were to make personal remarks about you?" she flashed at him. "Who asked you to come and tell me what I look like?"

Picking up his hat, Valentine strode angrily off the porch, and a moment later his car could be heard as he started up the engine.

As for Forbes Collins, in the next week he hardly spoke to his daughter, so angry was he at her behaviour, but this was not destined to last, for anger

gave place in Collins's heart to a great fear.

It was just over a week after his last quarrel with Joyce that Collins returned at his usual hour for dinner, and, when that meal was served, Joyce failed to put in an appearance. In moody silence Collins ate his dinner alone, but when ten o'clock came and no Joyce, Collins became a little alarmed.

Determining that Joyce must be out somewhere with Willie, Collins rang up the Scotts' house to ask Willie's parents if they knew anything of his whereabouts.

To Collins's surprise, it was Willie himself who answered the telephone, and Willie's voice was crammed full of frightened surprise when Mr. Collins asked him where Joyce was.

"I saw her this afternoon—we went out for a little turn in her car," Willie admitted over the wire. "Are you sure she is not above the garage, Mr. Collins?"

"No," replied Collins apprehensively, "I looked there before I rang you up."

"I'm coming right round myself," Willie told him without waiting for his permission.

A few minutes, and apparently entirely forgetting his late differences of opinion with Joyce's father, Willie stormed into the house.

"This is all your fault," he exclaimed hotly. "Every bit your fault," he went on, seeing that Collins took a very humble attitude over it all. "You've been such a brute to her that she's run away! That's what she's done—and I don't blame her! If you don't love her, I do—and by jiminy I'm going to find her!"

He prepared to dash from the house, but Collins, by now thoroughly frightened, stopped him with a gesture.

"I don't understand it," the elder man mused aloud. "You would have

thought that she would have told you about it!"

"For God's sake don't stand arguing," Willie snapped back at him, and it was proof of how disturbed Collins was in his mind in that he did not rebuke the boy for his tone. "For God's sake get on the 'phone and call up the police. Call up New York—get busy—do something—or I will."

Willie went quickly to the telephone, and shortly afterwards both the Minerva police and the headquarters of police in New York knew that the seventeen-year-old daughter of the banker had mysteriously disappeared.

Collins almost collapsed, for deep in his heart he was devoted to Joyce, and their frequent quarrels were only caused by a too great similarity of nature.

Somehow the night dragged through. Willie, despite telephonic commands from home, refused to return there. Instead, he sat in Collins's library and the telephone was kept busy all night.

Collins, on Willie's suggestion, caught the eight-thirty-two for New York the next morning, but his journey proved fruitless. After harassing the police and having enlisted the aid of the press, having used his influence with a big politician and having generally taken up every possible clue, Collins returned to Minerva, reaching there late the same evening. He had telephoned from New York the train he was travelling on, and so it was Willie who met him at the station.

"Any news?" asked the father breathlessly.

"None," Willie told him as they entered Collins's car and drove to the house. "I have a clue, though!"

"What is it?" Collins nearly hit a lamp-post in his excitement.

"I've only just got it," Willie returned excitedly, "but Valentine is not in town!"

"What do you mean by that?" flashed Collins at him.

"At first, I thought of white slavers," Willie answered thoughtfully, "but then Joyce is so clever. Now that I find Valentine is gone—well—I don't know what to think. I saw his housekeeper—and she didn't know anything about him except that he had telephoned to ask if there was any mail for him from East Marling."

"That's only about sixty miles," Collins said shortly. "What's the time?" He looked at the clock on the dashboard, which showed it to be twenty minutes to eleven.

"We could make it before one," Willie suggested, but already Collins had turned his car and was speeding East.

Mile after mile flew by in silence, and Collins exceeded every known speed law.

"I've advertised a five-thousand-dollar reward," Collins remarked once.

"Well, I intend to get that money," Willie returned grimly. "I want the girl more, though!"

"You can have your five thousand," the other growled.

As they entered the city limits of East Marling the clock showed it to be a quarter past twelve. Collins slowed down.

"There is only one decent hotel," Willie remarked. "It's a kind of roadhouse—a cabaret and all the rest of it. Better go there first. Turn to the right after the next corner."

Later, Collins drew up before the roadhouse. It was typical of that kind of place, where exorbitant prices, inferior music and insolent service prevailed.

"Better go about it cautiously," Willie advised, and Collins nodded assent.

The place was also a hotel, and Collins strode up to the desk.

"I want to register," he told the night clerk.

As he did so his eye caught the sig-

nature of Bertram Valentine after which Valentine had written the damning words "and wife."

Collins turned to the boy. Willie laughed feebly. Evidently the strain had been too much for him, for the boy seemed to have gone to pieces. He continued to laugh almost hysterically, and then he pulled himself together with an awful effort.

"Not a word," he whispered. "Let's get upstairs. I saw the number of their room."

Later, an officious bellboy having left them in the rooms they had taken, Collins, followed by Willie, tiptoed down the corridor and stopped at a door on which the former knocked loudly.

It was Valentine in pajamas and dressing-gown who opened the door, and it was Collins's fist that crashed into that surprised man's face. He staggered and almost fell, as Collins dashed by him into the room, closely followed by Willie.

A woman's voice screamed—but screamed subduedly, so that with the noise of the orchestra downstairs no one paid any attention.

With his mouth wide open with surprise, Collins viewed Diana, who was exquisite in a negligee.

"We were married this evening, dear Mr. Collins," explained Diana brightly, having immediately regained her poise. "And what do you mean by knocking my poor husband about?"

Followed explanations—explanations that were so thoroughly satisfactory that even the injured Valentine forgave the blow and wished the frightened father luck in his search.

"I never thought it of her," Collins growled as his car flew along the roads on the homeward journey a few minutes later.

"Well," remarked Willie cheerfully, "you certainly patted that beast, Valentine, one! I owed him one myself for

daring to look at Joyce—but I've got another idea about her."

"Your ideas seem a damn lot of good!" retorted Collins. "Still, what is it?"

"If you don't like my ideas, I won't tell you," Willie answered sulkily. "I'll wait till we get back."

As they entered on Maple Avenue, Willie stopped the car and alighted.

"I'll ring you up in a few minutes if my clue is any good," he said and disappeared into the darkness.

Greatly perturbed and yet believing strongly that his daughter, who was well-informed as to the dangers that threaten pretty young girls, would yet be all right, Collins let himself into his house.

About twenty minutes later, and the front door, which was unlocked, burst open, and Joyce, tugging Willie by the hand, entered breathlessly.

After her father's natural anxiety and excitement had calmed down, he turned to Willie and stretched out his hand.

"How did you do it?" he asked. "Now you must tell me all about it—now she is safe."

"You write me out a check for five thousand first," returned Willie calmly. "Now don't back down—you promised it."

"I didn't know you were such a mercenary blackguard," Collins retorted hotly.

Nevertheless, he went there and then to his desk, and when he returned he handed Willie his check for five thousand dollars.

"I'll give you back twenty-five hundred in the morning," Willie said as he put the check in his pocket.

"You mean—" began Collins as he saw a great white light.

"Just that!" chuckled Willie. "Joyce and I thought it all out. You said I had to make twenty-five hundred dollars. I only knew two men who

had that amount lying around loose in Minerva. Valentine was one—and he was impossible—and you were the other—so Joyce and I helped ourselves.”

He came and stood by Joyce and placed a bold arm around her waist. “You can’t refuse me the girl now,” Willie went on as Joyce encouraged him by her smile. “You said twenty-five hundred—and I’ve made by my own wits—or by Joyce’s, which is the same thing—double that. Do I get your consent or not?”

Collins gasped—then he chuckled—then he burst into a roar of relieved laughter.

“You get her, boy—you get her—and the job in the bank as well. Now tell me—where was Joyce all the time?”

“In my mother’s spare room,” Willie grinned. “To please me, Mother even fooled Dad. It was difficult—but we

did it—and I knew the police were such fools that it was quite safe to pull them!”

“And I got ever so tired of being shut up there,” Joyce added.

“But how did you know about Valentine?” Collins persisted.

“That was luck,” Willie admitted.

“His housekeeper told me what I told you—and I jumped to the conclusion that it might be Mrs. Townsend—Valentine, as she now is. I wanted to make sure that you should find her out—for I knew Valentine had been flirting with her. Then, I wanted to be sure that you would come across with that five thousand. As to the hotel—there is only one—and, anyway, it was worth taking a chance on your gasoline!”

“I think,” Collins admitted, “that I may yet make a banker of you,” but Willie’s real reward came in Joyce’s good night kiss.



May

By J. R. McCarthy

WHO'LL listen if I sing of May?

Nobody.

Who cares a darn that May is gay?

Nobody.

Who sees the fawn-flower's cup of gold?

Nobody.

Who loves the fair marsh-marigold?

Nobody!

Ah! They are praising Mary at

The movies.

They're watching Charlie chase a cat

In movies.

They see balloons and swimming maids

In movies.

And what are May or May's green glades

To movies?

Hats

By Frank Dorrance Hopley



WHEN Beatrice opened her eyes they looked up into the face of a young man who was bending over her.

"Are you hurt?" he asked anxiously.

"I don't know," replied Beatrice, trying to sit up, and falling back onto the pillows again. "Where am I?"

"On a lounge in the back of your store," responded the young man. "I carried you there when you fell and—"

"Fell!" interrupted Beatrice. "I don't remember! What happened?"

"You were in the window. Going to trim it up, I guess, and I was passing. You had your back towards the street and I stopped to watch you. Then you started to go up the step-ladder. It tipped a little and you lost your balance and fell. I ran in and picked you up, and carried you to the lounge. Here! Take a drink of water and maybe you'll feel better. It's lucky you weren't killed. You certainly came down with a smash!"

Beatrice suddenly stopped drinking the glass of water the young man had handed her.

"Oh!" she cried anxiously. "Oh! were they hurt too?"

"Who?"

"Pink Lady, and Spangles, and Poppy and Pearl, and Blue Beauty and Rosemary!"

The young man looked at her curiously. Evidently he thought the fall,

for the moment, had impaired her reason.

"I didn't see anybody but you," he answered. "Who are all these people you're so worried about?"

"Oh! the hats!"

"Hats!"

"Yes," said Beatrice leaning over the end of the lounge in order to get a better view of the store window. "Every hat I make I give a name. It's just like a child to me. For instance, that pink one all covered with chiffon and roses, I call 'Pink Lady'!"

"I see!" said the young man, laughing. "It's a great idea. No! the hats weren't hurt. They're on the counter just where you put them before you stood on the ladder!"

"I'm so glad! If I'd smashed them it would have been terrible. Just as if some one died."

"It would!" said the young man solemnly. "But, say!" he added. "What do you do when you sell one? Doesn't it make you feel badly to part with them?"

Beatrice laughed. She was feeling better!

"I have yet to experience my first sorrow," she said. "You see I've only had the shop open a little over a month, and I haven't sold any yet."

"Open a month and not made a sale?"

"No. I'm afraid the location isn't a very good one. I thought being near the avenue I would get a good deal of trade. But it hasn't come yet."

The young man was silent a moment. Then he rose and reached for his hat.

"If you're all right," he said smiling, "I'll be going. I've an appointment at ten and it's ten-thirty now. I'm so glad the fall didn't hurt you."

Beatrice put out her hand.

"I don't know how I can ever thank you for helping me," she said. "I might have laid in the window all the morning if it hadn't been for you, Mr.—"

"Cummings," finished the young man. "Howard Cummings! But say! Don't think you're going to get rid of me as easy as this, for you're not. Our introduction wasn't exactly according to Hoyle, but it was a regular knock-down, wasn't it," and he laughed boyishly. "I've got to go out of town for a few days on business, but when I get back I'm coming around and take you out to dinner. Will you go?"

"What's your business?" asked Beatrice, choosing to ignore his question.

"Hats!"

"Hats?"

"Yes! The same as yours. Only I sell them raw, without the fixings. But you didn't answer my question about going out with me. Will you?"

"Perhaps," said Beatrice a little doubtfully. "If you're in the hat business, maybe I could buy some of you when I've sold all I've got on hand. While we were having dinner we could talk business, couldn't we?"

"We could," said Cummings smilingly. "There's many a deal been made over a table-cloth. It's a go then! Make it Thursday night. I'll be back by that time!"

Beatrice was pretty! Even an enemy, if she had one, could not have truthfully denied that fact!

She was also young, which was an added charm!

Her figure was well rounded. Arms plump and pink, and her complexion as delicate as the tint of a sea-shell.

Take it all in all, she was a com-

panion not to be despised, from the viewpoint of a man of the world.

Howard Cummings took this all in at a glance, as he stepped into the little hat shop, at precisely six o'clock on that Thursday evening.

Of a sudden, that day, Beatrice had come to the determination to wear one of the hats she had on sale.

"Mine looks so shabby," she told herself in justification of her act.

All day long she had been trying to decide which of the six favorite ones it should be. Finally the choice narrowed down to "Pink Lady" and "Blue Beauty," and in the final count "Pink Lady" won.

When Cummings opened the door she had just put it on, and turned from the mirror to greet him. She was standing under a chandelier the light from which threw a sort of halo around her head.

Cummings stopped with the door half open, and looked at her admiringly!

"Well!" she said, flushing a little under his gaze. "Will I do?"

"You're beautiful," replied Cummings. "Beautiful!"

Beatrice blushed prettily. It was the first time she had ever received a compliment from a man.

"Come!" she said. "Let's go. I'm ravenous, aren't you? Which way shall we go?"

"Thought I'd take you down to my rooms," replied Cummings carelessly. "I've got a taxi outside and it won't take us long to get there. I hate restaurants! I've arranged to have dinner sent in from Masgetti's, an Italian place, nearby. There'll be just two of us. It'll be jolly, won't it?"

"Real spiffy," replied Beatrice laughing, yet inwardly wondering if she was doing the right thing in going. "Is it far?"

"Stuyvesant Square," said Cummings, as they came out and Beatrice

locked the door. "We'll be there in ten minutes!"

Cummings occupied three rooms on the second floor of a house near the Square, which had once been the abode of some of the elect. The drift uptown, however, had changed the character of the locality of late years, and the appearance of the place was far from what it once had been.

Entering the house, Cummings took Beatrice quickly up the stairs, and opening the door, switched on the light.

"Come in," he said, "this is where I hang out. What do you think of it?"

Beatrice looked around and gasped a little. It was far more gorgeous than anything she had ever seen.

"It's great!" she exclaimed admiringly. "Simply great. I could spend all the evening looking at the pictures!"

"I thought you were hungry," rejoined Cummings, laughing. "If you're not, I am! The pictures can wait. Come in here," opening the door of another room. "Dinner's all ready, eh, Verdi?"

The waiter smiled and nodded and showed Beatrice to a seat.

Then the dinner began!

It was different from anything Beatrice had ever known before. The queer dishes awed and fascinated her. She laughed at her vain attempts to corral the elusive spaghetti, which with Cummings' help, she at last succeeded in eating. When, finally, at his solicitation, she had been persuaded to partake of the somewhat odoriferous cheese, she laid down her knife and fork with a sigh of contentment.

"It was the best dinner I ever had," she said happily. "And to think, it's all over."

Cummings laughed, and even the solemn-faced Verdi smiled.

"That will do, Verdi," said Cummings. "You may go now. I'll attend to the rest!"

"Is there going to be anything more?" asked Beatrice, as Verdi closed the door with a grin. "I couldn't eat another thing for hours and hours!"

"We'll have a little wine to top off with," said Cummings, rising. "What kind do you like, red or white?"

Beatrice laughed.

"I never drank in my life before," she said, "and I don't suppose I ought to now, but just for once I'll take some red. That will match up with 'Pink Lady,' won't it?"

"And your cheeks," laughed Cummings. "You wait here and I'll get it: I won't be long."

As Cummings passed the door leading to the hall he turned the key in the lock and put it in his pocket. Then he went into the further room and opened a cupboard.

Beatrice closed her eyes for a moment. Then opened them again and jumped up.

"I'm going into the other room and look at the pictures," she called. "I didn't see half of them before dinner!"

She walked about the room looking at the paintings, and wondering why it took Cummings so long! What was he doing?

When at last he returned with a tray with two glasses upon it, Beatrice was standing before a picture of a woman, which hung over the mantel.

"Who is that?" she asked.

"My mother!" replied Cummings, and a note of tenderness came into his voice.

Beatrice turned slowly and faced him.

"She's a perfect dear," she said. "She looks exactly like my mother does! Isn't it great that we both have such good mothers? Do you know, I was a little bit afraid to come here with you tonight alone. I didn't know—well—you know the things you see in the movies! But now I've seen your

mother's picture, I know I'm as safe as I would be at home. A man with such a mother couldn't do wrong. Oh! is that the wine? Isn't it pretty and pink? Which glass do I take?"

A strange look came into Cummings' eyes and the tray he held in his hand trembled. Before Beatrice could take a glass he suddenly drew back. His elbow hit against a chair and the glasses were overturned and fell to the floor.

"Oh!" exclaimed Beatrice. "Did I do that? I'm so sorry, but the glasses didn't break!"

"No," said Cummings quietly, "it was all my fault. There's no more wine, though, so we'll have to go without."

"It doesn't matter," said Beatrice sweetly, "but I'm sorry it got spilled!"

Cummings made no reply but went to the window and threw up the shade. For several minutes he stood there silently watching the lights gleaming in the square below. When he turned to Beatrice again his face was pale but he had regained his composure.

"Tell me!" he said, "how's business? Made any sales yet?"

Beatrice shook her head a little sadly.

"No," she said, "and what's more it don't look as if I was going to. I've about made up my mind to close the shop and look around for a job."

"Oh, I wouldn't do that," exclaimed Cummings. "Stick it out, you'll surely do business in time!"

Beatrice laughed!

"That's all very well," she said. "But when it comes time to pay the rent and there isn't anything to pay with, one don't know what to do."

"Oh! that's how it is," said Cummings gravely. "I see! But perhaps you'll have better luck soon."

Beatrice sighed.

"I hope so," she said, "but it's got to come soon. Then, as she counted the strokes of a clock in a nearby

church tower, "I must be going now. Mother will be waiting. She isn't very well and I don't want to keep her up late. I don't know how I can ever thank you for such a lovely evening. It's the best I ever had in my life!"

"I'm glad you've enjoyed yourself," said Cummings as he handed her "Pink Lady" and watched her put it on. "I hope this won't be the last dinner we'll have together. And we'll hope for better luck at the store!"

And on the wings of the wish, luck came flying!

The very next day a woman walked past the little hat shop, looked in the window, and came back. For a few moments she stood gazing at the hats, then she entered the shop.

When she came out, "Pink Lady" was reposing in a box, tagged and addressed, while Beatrice gazed lovingly at four ten-dollar bills which she held in her hand.

The following afternoon two girls came in, and with many expressions of delight, purchased "Poppy" and "Blue Beauty."

Within ten days the other hats in the window which Beatrice had caressed and chided for not captivating the feminine public, had gone the way of the others, and she was busy making more to take their place.

Only once during that time had she seen Cummings. Then he had just dropped in to ask how she was getting along. He was as pleased as Beatrice to hear of her success.

"As soon as the rush is over at our shop we'll have another dinner together," he said. "We're working nearly every night now getting out orders."

"I'm ready," laughed Beatrice. "That was the best dinner I ever had. I wonder if the next will taste as good!"

A week later Beatrice decided she must have some more hats!

"I'll close early and run down to Mr. Cummings' shop, and see what he's got," she said one rainy afternoon. "It's on Houston street, near Lafayette, he said. I guess I can find it."

Ten minutes later Beatrice climbed aboard a Broadway car and soon alighted amid that seething mass of humanity from the old and new world which nightly throngs that part of the city.

As she entered the shop of Cummings and Son, it appeared that business was about to cease for the day.

"We're not working tonight," said Cummings as he ushered her into his little office. "But I'll show you what we've got after the girls are gone."

"I'll just look over the stock and see if there's anything I can use!" said Beatrice loftily.

Cummings laughed!

A girl put her head in the door.

"Good night, Mr. Cummings," she said.

"Good night, Mollie," he answered!

Two more flung back their farewells as they passed out.

As Beatrice looked at them she grew puzzled. They appeared strangely familiar. Where had she seen them before, she wondered.

Then, as three others went by and waved to Cummings, she gasped.

"Oh!" she said. "Oh! Look!"

"What?" asked Cummings curiously.

"Those girls! Who are they?"

"They work here. Why?"

"Their hats!"

"What about them?"

"Why, there's 'Pink Lady,' and 'Poppy,' and 'Blue Beauty,' and 'Rosemary,' and all of them. All my hats that I sold!"

Cummings started and his face reddened.

"Oh!" said Beatrice, looking first at him and then at the disappearing girls with their gorgeous headgears. "Did

you—? You did—! I know you did!"

"Yes," admitted Cummings. "I did tell them about your shop and that it was a fine place to get hats. I believe they are all very well pleased with their purchases."

Beatrice stood regarding him seriously.

"You can't spoof me," she said. "I know those girls couldn't afford to buy those kind of hats. You did it! You told them to buy the hats and gave them the money to pay for them, just to help me out. I know you did. And oh! I thought I was building up a fine trade, and now—" and Beatrice's lips quivered.

Cummings looked towards the door. It was closed! All the girls had gone! He went over to where Beatrice was standing!

"Yes," he said, "I'll plead guilty! I did do it. It was the only way I could think of to help you! I knew you wouldn't let me give you the money. I didn't suppose, though, you'd come down here and see them with the hats on. But now I'm glad you did, for it gives me a chance to tell you something I've been wanting to for some time."

"What?" said Beatrice, looking up quickly.

Cummings hesitated. He didn't seem to know how to begin.

"I've another confession to make," he said at last, a little nervously. "It's about that night you had dinner with me in my rooms. I don't know how to say it exactly, but—I had other plans when I took you there, than you knew—I—"

Beatrice was regarding him gravely.

"Yes," she said slowly, "I know! That's why you locked the door, wasn't it?"

Cummings started!

"You saw me do that?" he asked in astonishment.

"Yes," replied Beatrice, "and I was scared stiff. Then I thought if I got you talking about your mother it would be all right. And it was."

Cummings laid his hand on Beatrice's arm.

"I'm going to ask your forgiveness," he said earnestly. "Please don't think badly of me! Give me another chance!

And some day when you have learned you can really trust me, Beatrice, I'm going to tell you something, and I hope you will listen. Will you?"

Beatrice looked up shyly. "

"Yes," she said, "when that time comes I'll listen, Howard! In the meantime, suppose we just talk about—Hats!"



The Days of Old

By Hale Merriman

OLD man, your day is over,
Go put your slippers on;
Like old dog Tray, you've had your day,
But now your day is gone!

You heard the call of April
And with her danced awhile,
Like springtime flood your aged blood
Surged warm beneath her smile.

From firesides warm and cosy,
From easy chairs you came,
With toothless smiles and ancient wiles
To play at April's game.

You had your Indian summer,
A sweet, brief while to play,
While soldiers brave across the wave
Mixed in the battle fray.

But now your hour is ended,
No longer may you dance!
Yield to the truth—our nation's youth
Is home again from France.



Lonely Heart

By Harry C. Hervey, Jr.



HE lamps of Shadwell High Street splashed against the savage purple of the night; there was no brightness to them, nothing to relieve the gloom of the crowded, toppling houses. They were oppressive. They were ghastly—and they only served to increase the palpitations of my heart.

I am not a nervous nian, but I had heard wild tales of Shadwell and St. George's, of the gaping maws of their black alleys . . . and of little children's screams that cut the night like a sharp blade.

"Don't be moved by a pale face, pale hair and a plaintive appeal," my friend Ronald Braithwaite, of Scotland Yard, had warned me. "If I were you, I wouldn't go into Shadwell alone. You're taking your life in your own hands. But you Americans are all bull-headed . . ."

Too late I began to value his advice. I knew nothing of this dark quarter of London where the weird dusk crushed your very soul with terror . . . and the smell of bilge-water and other offensive odors made you sick; I only knew that out of idle American curiosity I was seeking a certain Olaf Bjorn's beer-house where I would enquire for a man called Yan Ericsson.

I had made up my mind that I would not leave the Greatest City in the World until I visited the various quarters. I had spent an evening in Limehouse, Stepney, Blackwall, Whitechapel, the Isle of Dogs, but my curiosity would not be quenched until I had viewed the

blond giants who come up from the lapping Thames to drink vile beer and make eyes at the pallid girls of London's Scandinavian quarter. I chose the hours after dusk for my visits because there is something alluring about the nocturnal. Day is derisive; night hides the bitter scars that dawn reveals in argent irony.

At intervals in the street the black opening of an alley leered at me and from its dark recesses came brutal curses in some guttural foreign tongue—at least I supposed they were curses. They sounded terrible. Occasionally I saw a shadowy person slinking among the piles of tumbled dwellings, or the gleam of a light in an open window, but for the main part the street was deserted and lonely. It was more than lonely; it was frightful. And those yawning alleyways!

After a deal of observation and maneuvering, I finally located a place that—according to Braithwaite's description—resembled Olaf Bjorn's. I stood outside a moment, wondering whether or not I should enter. It was not inviting. A pale lamp gasped above the sign that bore what suggested Swedish lettering. And through the cracks of a sagging door a few streams of light struggled out. The windows were covered. From the interior came sounds of boorish mirth.

At length I summed up courage and pushed the sagging door open. If I expected my entrance to be noticed I was disappointed; no one looked at me. They were too interested in their beer and loud talk. I was almost choked by

the reek of stale beer, of musty food—and men. It was horrible.

Striding past the tables nearest the door, I sat down in the corner, attempting to be as inconspicuous as possible. As is the way when one tries to be inconspicuous, I failed. Every face in the room seemed suddenly turned upon me. I wished that I had never come. I was vaguely wondering what their opinion of me was when a big blond slouched up and asked in broken English what I wanted. I told him beer. When he returned I enquired if he knew Yan Ericsson. He grunted.

"Ay tank so," he said gruffly.

"Is he here this evening?"

The big blond surveyed me stupidly.

"Ay tank so," he said gruffly.

I asked if I might see him. His face never relaxed.

"Ay tank so," he said again, and without speaking lumbered out of the door at my side.

The beer was vile. I wanted to spit it out but I didn't dare. I only sat there in silent agony for what seemed an interminable stretch of time. Finally Ericsson came. He loomed up out of the darkness in the doorway, a huge hulk of Swedish manhood, large blue eyes looking out from beneath a mop of uncombed yellow hair. He held a pipe between his teeth.

"You want to see me?" he asked, a good-natured smile lighting his frank features. His English was splendid. The only perceptible foreign accent was a slight hesitation before each word. I liked Yan Ericsson immediately. He looked honest.

"Why, yes," I said, secretly admiring the sinewy muscles exposed by his short sleeves. "My friend Mr. Braithwaite told me to look you up. You know, Braithwaite of—"

A peculiar expression in his eyes stopped me. He sat down, removing the pipe from between his teeth.

"I don't think I would say *Scotland Yard* so anybody hear," he almost whispered. He winked. "They might . . ." I understood.

"He tells me you've helped him often," I remarked.

Yan grinned.

"Oh, sometime I help him, but I don't think I help much."

"He said you would show me a bit of Shadwell," I said. "You know, I'm one of those inquisitive, snooping Yankees." I smiled.

"I been to America twice. . . . Ship. . . . New York each time. I like New York. . . ."

But my interest had been diverted from my companion's conversation. Where I was sitting I could see the door near me and the darkness beyond. It was a moving figure that attracted me—a figure that detached itself from the shadows and assumed the proportions of a slender girl. For a full moment she hovered in the aperture, her thin face revealed in all its pallor, her luminous eyes upon me. Such pallid cheeks! Such pallid hands! And the speechless aching of a million years in her young eyes! She seemed a dim dream that hung there an instant and was gone. But her eyes were not gone—nor the white face and the thin lips that moved in silent appeal. She dared not speak, yet sent an appeal more touching than if it had been voiced. I forgot Braithwaite's warning. There could be no deception in those young eyes, no lie in the soul of someone that seemed clean and untouched despite the filth of surroundings. I thought of a white pond lily struggling to life from a bed of mud. I started to rise.

"No!" hissed Ericsson. He saw my involuntary movement and his muscular arm shot out. My eyes sought his. They were burning blue. The vise closed tighter about my wrist. I saw

the huge muscles of his forearm grow taut.

"Ericsson!" I half whispered, sinking into my seat. The next moment he was smiling, his dirty pipe clamped between his teeth.

"I like New York," he said jovially. "Lots of nice people."

"But man!" I persisted, "she was in trouble!"

He grinned. "I like New York," he repeated. "Lots of nice people." Suddenly he leaned across the table to me. His blue eyes burned again. But they were honest. "If she is in trouble," I heard him say, "You can't help her; nobody can!" There was something fierce in his tone.

"And you'll show me around Shadwell?" I began lamely. He nodded.

"There's nothing to see—but dirt. I'll take you though. Not tonight." He looked behind him. "You better go. Come back tomorrow."

"I'll find you here?" I asked as I rose. He grinned and got up.

"Sure."

And I left the reeking place. But I could not leave the memory of that pale face, of those eyes; of the tall blond Swede with his strange actions. They haunted me and would not go away.

Who was that girl in the dark doorway? Why had she stood there a moment, looking at me in appeal? Who was Yan Ericsson, the big Viking who spoke such good English? Why did he force me back into my chair when I attempted to follow her? What was she to him—if anything?

I didn't know.

But I wanted to know.

II

As I left Olaf Bjorn's I looked at my watch. It was ten-thirty. Too early to end my evening—but what could I do? I did not particularly relish wan-

dering blindly in Shadwell, for it did not appeal to me as a place to wander in. Every black alley mouth held a nameless terror, every doorway masked a lurking marauder. Why was I so nervous? Why did I start and look behind me at every sound? And of what was I afraid? Of nothing human; of something that crouched back of an invisible veil of the supernatural, that could not be hurt by earthly blows or invention. Have you ever been afraid of—something?

It was not cold, but I drew my coat around me and hurried down the street, past the alleys where now and then the shadow of a child threw itself against the hideous mouth. I shunned them as if they were lepers. Their smiles were so strangely cold. Not the smile of a normal child.

Then I heard someone scream.

I wonder if you have ever heard a girl scream in the night? It is bad enough anywhere—but in Shadwell! I don't think I shall ever forget it. I often wake from a peaceful slumber now and hear the echo of that scream.

"You're taking your life in your own hands . . ."

I forgot the warning. I only heard that awful cry. It chilled me. My heart almost stopped beating. Yes, I was afraid—for who wouldn't be? But someone was in trouble, perhaps one of those pale little girls I had passed in the throats of those alleys, perhaps—

The noise came from the black opening on my right. I could see nothing, only a blot of sickly light in the farthest recess. The light was not from a doorway, for it fell in ghostly wash over something that looked like the outlines of an entrance. It probably spilled from some window in the upper story.

Hesitating no longer, I entered the alley. Its vague, damp walls choked me, but I determined to find the source of that scream. If I found it I didn't

know what I would do—probably stare like an idiot—and get killed; I merely obeyed an impulse that was anything but heroic. Perhaps I was morbidly curious. . . . Perhaps I was horribly afraid—for I have heard that under the influence of fear one often does strange things. Perhaps—but there is no use to attempt analysis. It wouldn't suit the story.

In the rear of the black hole I was confronted by a door. Over my head I saw an open window coughing pitiful gusts of light. I was standing where the light fell upon me and as I moved into the protecting shadow of the doorway some heavy object hurled from above crashed on the stone paving. A fragment of it struck me on the cheek. The pain of countless needles shot through my face. I caught my upper lip between my teeth in an effort to control myself—a habit of mine. That blow stung me to action. It made me mad. I felt as though I could batter the door down with my fists.

"Dammit!" I whispered tersely. I am not often profane, but that seemed the only possible way to express my feelings. I hurled myself against the door and it crashed in. It must not have been bolted, for I was flung forward face downward on the floor. An instant I lay there stunned.

"Dammit!" I said again, between my teeth. Unseen hands grabbed me. They tore at me. I heard my clothing rip.

"Dammit!" I choked, for the third time. "Let me . . ."

It felt as though my skull was crushed. It burned with the heat of a thousand flames. There was nothing but darkness.

I could see a light like a star—so very, very dim that it must have been a million miles away. The happenings of that period of unconsciousness are so

twisted that I only retain a slight knowledge of when I first opened my eyes. There were many shadows—and in the shadows a face.

"Are you awake?" I heard a voice asking. The words were far away.

"Are you awake?" it repeated. Then the veil was drawn. I struggled to a sitting position, my head swimming horribly.

"Who are you?" I asked. But even as I asked it I knew. I could never forget the pitiful face. She seemed more forlorn than ever in the dimness of the room, her large eyes more poignant than stars.

"I think I know who you are," I said. "I saw you at Olaf Bjorn's, didn't I?"

She nodded slowly.

"My name is Clelia," she announced in good English, her eyes never leaving me.

"Clelia!" I repeated. "What an odd name!"

"I am partly English—my mother. . . . We have always lived in London." Her eyes were more solemn than ever. "Her father's mother was from Venice. Clelia is Italian. My mother like the name."

Suddenly I remembered where I was and what had happened. My head ached terrifically.

"But tell me about . . . all this," I asked. "Didn't I hear someone scream?"

A little smile twisted her lips.

"I am sorry. I had to scream," she confessed.

"Someone was hurting you?"

Clelia shook her head. "Oh, no; my father told me to scream."

"You mean that you did it deliberately—to lure me here?" At a sudden thought I felt for my pocketbook. It was gone. "I've been robbed!"

"That was why I screamed," she said calmly. "But I am sorry, oh, so sorry. I wouldn't have done it for the world!"

"Then why did you do it?"

"Because he told me to."

"Do you do everything your father tells you to do, whether it is good or bad?" I questioned.

She nodded.

"Why?"

"I don't want to, oh, no!—but I have learned that it is best." She reached up and opened her waist, revealing a soft white shoulder and the suggestion of an immature breast. The pale skin was covered with bruises.

"He *beat* you?"

"Of course," she said. "They arrested him for it once, but he got away. He didn't beat me after that. I was so tired that I promised I would do everything he told me if he wouldn't touch me. But he talks to me so terribly—swears at me—and oh, I want someone to love me instead of that!"

Something glistened on her eyelashes. I swallowed hard.

"Your mother, where is she?"

She crossed to the open window. Through the aperture I could see the night sky and a few stars, the housetops rising out of a low mist.

"See, up there . . . beyond the stars," she said, pointing out of the window. It was such a childish movement, so full of faith—yet how old!—more ancient than human history! She was young, this child of London, but a soul older than the crumbled walls of Babylon looked out from her eyes.

"Why do you submit to it? Why don't you run away?"

She smiled wearily. "It's no use. I tried. And anyway, he promised he would not make a bargain if I would do as he told me."

"What do you mean 'a bargain'?"

She looked at me in surprise. "Why, don't you know? . . . There are lots of young girls in Shadwell, and nearly every night the big sailors come up from their boats on the Thames. They

have been out at sea for a long while. . . . When they leave the fathers of those little girls have more money for beer. . . ."

It made me sick. I understood the cold smiles of those little girls clinging to the mouths of the alleys. The faces of the huge blond sailors at Olaf Bjorn's rose up before me. Suddenly all the glamour and romance faded. It was tragedy. The mirth of the reeking beer-house was bestial. I could not restrain a shudder.

"And your father promised not to make one of these bargains?"

Something stirred the dreaminess of her eyes. "He promised," she whispered, "*but he has broken that promise . . .*"

For a long while I could not speak. "When did it happen?" I asked.

"Oh, no, not yet!" She glanced out of the window. "See," she said, pointing to a bright star that lingered just above the jagged housetops, "that is the Love Star. Every evening it comes up from the other side of the world and scrapes along the tops of the houses. My mother told me it was the Love Star. I used to sit in this window looking at it. After my mother went away I longed for someone else who would be kind to me. . . . He came, after so long a time, and oh, he was so good! He called me Lonely Heart. I used to slip out at night and meet him down on the docks. My mother taught me good English and I tried to help him to speak correctly, too. And every night we used to watch the Love Star . . . and dream—until something happened. One night he told me that we must never meet again. When I returned my father said that he had made a bargain—one of the sailors who would love me a great deal. . . . This sailor was going out to sea, to another country—and he would take me with him!"

She was crying softly.

"But you're not going?"

"Yes, I'm going."

"But you don't want to?"

She repressed a shudder. "Oh, no—no!"

"Then *why* are you going?"

"What else is there to do?" She made a helpless gesture.

"Run away," I suggested.

She laughed. It was a bitter laugh. It sounded almost hideous coming from one so young. "Run away?" Her lips twisted into a cynical smile. "And where would I go? To some home for Helpless Girls where they wear horribly clean brown dresses and eat porridge and have to listen to lectures by goggle-eyed old men who aren't good enough to kiss a snake? Holy God, no! Poverty is bad enough—but *that*!"

"How old are you?" I asked.

"Sixteen," came the answer. Sixteen! And I wondered if ever she had been a child, if ever sweet laughter had brushed her pale little lips, if ever her bitter heart had leaped joyously at the call of Spring, when the heaths are sprayed with wild roses.

"Surely in all London there is some place for you to go," I ventured. "Don't you know some kind people who—"

"Kind people?" she burst forth in tones that were worse than gall. "Are there any kind people? Anyway, my father would follow me. You don't know him. And—and it may not be so bad, it—" She stopped suddenly.

"What do you mean, 'it may not be so bad'?" I asked.

"To go away with him. He may do whatever he likes," she said softly, "but I will be untouched. . . ." It seemed suddenly as if the light from one of those stars in the window caught the gleam of her eyes. "I shall not be his—never—never—*never*!"

"There must be *some* way to save you from such a fate," I said at length, des-

perately. "What of this man, the one you used to meet?"

"That is what I can't understand. I've seen him twice since that night when he told me we must never see each other again, but was only able to speak to him one time for a few seconds. It is not like him."

"There is . . ." she whispered, "I knew that there was a way when I saw you at Olaf Bjorn's. Won't you take me away with you?"

I could not answer; I didn't know what to say.

"I will think it over and—"

"It may be too late!" she cried pit-eously. "Oh, take me away—take me away!" She had fallen on her knees before me, her white hands clutching mine. Her uplifted eyes made my heart ache.

"I will!" I cried impulsively. "I'll make arrangements tomorrow for us to cross the Channel and go to Paris. I will put you in safe hands in Paris."

She was sobbing. I lifted her head.

"Child, child," I said, "you mustn't cry. I'll meet you to-morrow night at the entrance of the alley about nine o'clock."

"Something may happen before then," she whispered.

"I hardly think so. Try to control yourself. I must hurry. Your father might find us here. Which way do I go?"

She got up. I followed her into the adjoining apartment which, as the other room, was gray and squalid and poverty-ravished. The reek and filth of it almost nauseated me.

"You will have to drop from this window into the alley," she said, indicating a shattered window casement. "It is the alley that you first came in to."

Half over the sill I paused.

"Good night, Clelia," I said, taking

her white hand in mine. "Don't be afraid. I will come."

"You won't forget?"

"No."

She looked at me steadily for a few seconds.

"No," she said, "you will not forget."

. . . But oh, if only *he* had done this!"

And clinging with my hands to the sill, I lowered myself into what looked like a bottomless abyss. I dropped and my feet touched the hard stone. In the window above me I caught a last glimpse of a pallid face and eyes that were more pitiful than the aching womb of night.

III

THE following evening somewhere about eight o'clock I called Scotland Yard over the telephone and enquired for Braithwaite. After a short while of waiting I heard his voice over the wire.

"Hello," I said, "Braithwaite? . . . This is Lombard. Yes. Are you very busy? I'd like to see you shortly."

"I'll be there as soon as I can get a car. I suppose you found something interesting last night?" he asked, then laughed. "I thought you would . . ." And I heard the instrument click.

In about three-quarters of an hour Braithwaite knocked at the door of my room and I admitted him.

"Didn't have any trouble, did you?" was his first question. I showed him the bump on my head.

"Robbery?"

"Robbery—and something else."

"Hurry and tell me, old chap; I'll bet there was a girl, too!"

"Exactly!" I exclaimed.

"You heard someone scream, and quite the good fellow that you are, you thought someone was in trouble—even after my warning! I know."

"But someone was in trouble," I announced. And I told him the whole story.

"It *does* sound interesting," he said when I had finished. "But are you sure she wasn't spoofing you?"

"I would swear it!" I said emphatically.

"And why did you call me?"

"I want you to go with me tonight," I said.

He smiled. "I don't think I could trust you to go alone again," then he suddenly sprang to his feet. "By George! Quick! Describe her to me more minutely. Did she have large eyes, yellow hair and—"

"Yes; eyes sadder than the most tragic."

"Was she pale?"

"Paler than death itself!"

"Did she appear to be about sixteen or seventeen, yet with a strangely old expression?"

"Yes; why?"

"What a fool I am! What a dolt!" He crossed the room and lifted the receiver of the telephone. "Hello. Have a cab waiting in front when I get down. Room 624. I'm in a hurry. . . ." He picked up my hat from where it was lying on the table. "Here—we must hurry. Even now we may be too late."

"But tell me—"

"Wait till we get started in the car," he snapped.

I followed him to the lift, down, and through the office to the entrance of the hotel. A large limousine was waiting. "Room 624—East India Dock, just above the Reach. . . ." Braithwaite flung at the chauffeur as we jumped in. "And double fare if you hurry!"

"Well," I said sarcastically as the car leaped forward, "do you think you have time now to tell me what all this is about?"

He grinned. "Awfully sorry, old fellow, but I didn't want to waste time."

I think I have seen your Lonely Heart—and tonight! Rather a singular coincidence. I happened to be down on East India Dock, and as I passed one of the shipping schooners, a fair-sized craft, I saw a man and a girl. It seemed rather strange to take a girl aboard one of those vessels, but even at that I wouldn't have paid them any special notice if she hadn't seemed reluctant to accompany him. I wasn't sure at the time, but now I am positive that her hands were bound. She looked back over her shoulder and in a sort of hazy way I saw her face. It had the expression of a captured animal. I believe she started to speak. I passed on, giving it very little more thought. But her face haunted me. I had proceeded only a short distance when I thought I heard a scream. I stopped for a second, but hearing no repetition decided I was mistaken. I'd be willing to swear now that it your Lonely Heart and her master."

"Do you remember the name of the boat?"

"Fortunately; it was the *Wilhelmina*. . . . Hello, I believe we're here."

He thrust open the door and jumped out before the car came to a standstill. I followed close at his heels.

"Wait till we return," he instructed the chauffeur, pushing a banknote into his hand.

Misty darkness brooded over the squat, dark buildings of East India Dock. A stillness broken only by the shrilling of a river boat pervaded the air. From where we were I could see the outline of the river front. I walked close to Braithwaite's side. His head was bent forward slightly, his keen eyes scrutinizing the semi-darkness before him. Suddenly he stopped.

"Damnation!" burst from his lips. "There's no need to go any further. Her mooring-place is vacant. I can see from here. There's just one more

chance. Come on, we're going to Olaf Bjorn's!"

"Why to Olaf Bjorn's?" I asked as we were once more deposited in the limousine.

"You'll see," he snapped. "I've been a big ass. I should have gone back when I heard that scream. This last chance is based only on a sudden thought of mine."

It seemed years before the car drew up before the Swedish beer-house. Instructing the chauffeur to wait, we entered the stuffy place with its sawdust covered floor. The usual motley crowd was there—drinking that unspeakable beer. Braithwaite sought out the slovenly blond waiter whom I had seen on the preceding night and asked for Ericsson.

"Upstairs," came the surly reply.

"Come on," my companion flung over his shoulder as he hurried from the room. Up a pair of creaking stairs I followed him into a musty hall. He pushed open a door just above the landing. Yan Ericsson was sitting before a table, his pipe between his teeth, his yellow hair more tousled than ever. He looked up surprised as we entered.

"Ericsson," Braithwaite snapped, "you're the damndest fool I ever knew!"

The big Swede got up. He didn't know whether to smile or frown.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that even a boy of fifteen wouldn't let his girl be taken away from him *and sold like a piece of cattle!*"

An angry snarl curled the big blond's lips.

"It's a lie!" he screamed. He started to make a leap, but Braithwaite whipped out his pistol.

"No you don't. Sit down!"

The Swede never moved.

"Sit down!" my friend repeated. Ericsson obeyed in a surly manner.

"Now you listen to me. I oughtn't to do it, but I'm going to help you save your girl. I don't know any of the circumstances, but from what Lombard told me and from what I imagine, I think you're either a badly fooled person or the damndest cad in London! What is the name of the girl you were telling me about not long ago?"

"Clelia," he replied. Braithwaite looked at me with a smile.

"That's what I thought, and you allowed her to be bartered off by her father to some scum of the sea to be taken away on his vessel—"

"I did not!" Ericsson cried savagely. "He won her by rights!"

"What do you mean, 'won her by rights'?" I questioned.

The Swede's eyes fell to the floor. He did not speak for a few seconds. "One night I was gambling with Sigurd Vannis and a few of my other friends. We drank a lot, too much beer. I can't remember exactly how it happened. I lost a lot of money, all I had, and Sigurd suggested that I put up my girl against his pile. It made me mad at first, but he said he had seen her and he loved her and he wanted to marry her. He said cards would be a good way to settle the matter. I was drunk and I agreed. We played to see whether he or I would make Clelia his wife. He won. . . . The next night I told her that we mustn't see each other any more. I was ashamed to tell her the reason. I avoided her, thinking that if she was to marry—"

"But this fellow didn't intend to marry her!" I cut in. He looked at me sharply.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean that Sigurd, your friend, bought her from her father to take with him on his voyage."

"But Sigurd is my friend!"

"Nevertheless, Sigurd deceived you!" I said.

"How do you know this?" he questioned, still doubtful.

"Because," said Braithwaite, "I saw him taking her aboard the schooner!"

His blue eyes were like needles.

"But what can we do?" he said helplessly.

"I'll telephone and have one of the police boats meet us at the nearest moorings," said Braithwaite. "I'm going to do what I can for you. It's almost madness, but we'll follow the schooner *Wilhelmina*!"

IV

THE Thames was shrouded in an evil mist. Occasionally a smudge of light drifted past us on the remote bank. I stood in the bow of the little cutter, Braithwaite and the Swede, Ericsson, beside me. The latter stood staring over the bow, his head thrown back, the wind waving his long yellow hair. I could see his big fists. They were clinched.

"This is the maddest thing I've ever done," Braithwaite said to me. "It's risking our lives, too, for God alone knows how far out the schooner is by now. However, I think it will be interesting to get the fellow Vannis. I can find out the father of the girl and begin cleaning up that child-bargaining that's been going on so long in Shadwell."

I shivered. The cruel wind whipped against my cheeks, cut sharply through my clothing to the bare skin. The men beside me looked as though they were suspended in the mist. Ahead there was nothing but darkness—a darkness that seemed more horrible than the corridors of sudden Death—and behind the monotonous throbbing of the motor. From the rear came the sudden clamour of bells. I could hear the water churning.

"Launch on the starboard, sir!" someone behind me shouted. The cut-

ter made a swerve and ploughed on through the fog.

"Wot the bloody 'ell d'ye think this is?" a voice from the distance bellowed. A black blot in the wake of the boat marked the swiftly diminishing shadow of the launch.

"This is Limehouse Reach," Braithwaite told me. It was a mystery how the cutter held her course as well as she did in that awful fog. I expected at any moment to crash into some other craft and begin an unpremeditated exploration of Nirvana.

"Easy on the port, sir!" shot to my ears out of the fog.

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"A little more! There!"

"Aye, aye. . . ." The voices were drowned in the wailing of a siren.

"Sharp lookout!" shouted Braithwaite.

"Where are we?" I asked. "I can't see a damned thing in this mist!"

"Past Blackwall; I think that was the Reach. . . ."

I looked at the illuminated dial of my watch. Three o'clock to the minute. Gray hulls, seeming monstrous in the density of the overhanging vapour, small tugs, crafts of even more diminutive proportions swept past us. Now and then I caught a brief glimpse through the fog of a face peering from the lighted window of some vessel. The Thames seemed suddenly to have opened its mouth. The banks were spreading farther away, the lights growing dimmer and farther between. Indistinguishable blurs bulged out of the mist, which now seemed to be clearing, and evaporated.

"Can't you make it a few knots harder?" Braithwaite yelled over his shoulder.

"Tight forward, sir; she's doing the best she can!"

I became aware of a slight rolling of the little boat. A grim smile hovered

on Braithwaite's mouth. The Swede was a statue. He had not moved since we left the down-Thames dock. A big hulk appeared suddenly alongside us.

"Ahoy there!" Braithwaite shouted, using his hands as a megaphone.

"Ahoy yer'sel'!" came back to him. A dim light glimmered on the port side. "An' watch where you're goin'!"

"Seen anything of a big schooner going seaward?" the man from Scotland Yard bellowed, still using his hands as a megaphone.

"Seen two!"

"Which way?"

"Beyond the Nore! 'Bout 'arf hour ago."

"Where the devil are we?"

I just caught the words—"Off Sheerness. . . ."

"Good God!" I muttered aloud. "It's madness to go any farther!"

For the first time Ericsson spoke. "No!" he said fiercely.

Braithwaite laughed harshly. "It was madness to ever come, but I've gone this far. . . ."

Pitching and rolling the little cutter rode the waves, which now were bursting over the bow. I was almost drenched. I expected any moment to be hurled into the thrashing water.

An hour. The Nore Light lay ahead. Cold sea winds, blown from dreary expanses of winter ocean, sprang up with new force. The cutter had weathered good so far, but the sea was becoming too strong. The fog drifted away on the wings of the wind and as far as the eye could see was nothing but an awful darkness.

"Hardly enough juice to make it to land, sir!" someone in the rear shouted.

"Damn the land!" Braithwaite hurled back at him. "I'm uot going to be beat this late in the game! I—"

"Schooner on the starboard!" interrupted his sentence.

Yes! A dark blur, long and vague, lay to the starboard.

"The searchlight!" roared Braithwaite.

Like a sinuous finger the light broke through the veil touching the dark blur. I could see the sails unfurled, boom and mast straight and clearly defined.

"Can you make out the name?" I inquired.

Borne upward on the crest of a wave, we hung there a second and plunged nose down into the trough. The little craft trembled at the force of the impact, reeled, then righted herself. The Swede had lost his balance, but clung to the rail, his eyes following the trail of light.

"Yes!" burst from his lips, "*the—Wilhelmina!*"

"How can we ever make it?" I screamed, hanging to the slippery rail.

"We've got to!" came back to me, then: "*Stop . . . in the King's name!*"

Something guttural floated back across the water.

"*. . . In the King's name! . . .* Alongsides! Quick, dammit, quick!"

Only a few yards separated us. We were in the trough—no! We seemed suspended in the air over the black expanse, then down . . . down. Good God!" someone screamed. I braced myself for what was coming.

"Every man for his own!"

Only Providence saved us from being driven hard against the side of the vessel and hurled without mercy into the sea, whose fangs seemed drawn to devour every living thing. The day of miracles is not gone; we swept alongside, the rope ladder dangling near us. Several sailors grabbed the mooring lines.

"Hold! Hold!" I shouted. And they held! God! I do not know how they did! Ericsson had clutched the rope ladder, the muscles of his big arms bulging, and with the leap of every

wave we crashed against the side of the schooner. No human force could divert the madness of that sea.

"Up on deck!" Braithwaite yelled. "Every man for the ladder! She won't last long!"

I saw the engineer swing out on the mooring lines. Braithwaite shoved me toward the ladder and before I could move or protest I was lifted up and found myself clambering over the rail of the deck. Looking backward I saw the men swinging for the ropes, Braithwaite and Ericsson holding off the little boat.

"Quick!" I screamed. "Come up!"

I saw Braithwaite cast a glance at the Swede, then the former made a leap from his position to the ladder. The police boat was swept out from under them and they hung above the black water. Ericsson was the first aboard. He fell exhausted on the wet deck. I pulled Braithwaite over. There was blood on his hands.

"Close shave!" he muttered, smiling queerly.

A group of sailors were clustered about us. Suddenly Ericsson got to his feet. His shirt was torn from his body, his big chest and arms exposed in all their physical power.

"Damn you, Sigurd Vannis!" he hissed. A big fellow in the group around us stepped forward. "You stole my girl!" continued Ericsson. "You lied to me!"

The man Vannis laughed.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

Ericsson laughed this time.

"Celia is aboard this ship!" he roared. "Don't tell me she isn't!"

Just as Sigurd Vannis was about to make a denial, I saw a shadowy form slip up from the bulkhead. Even in the darkness I could tell it was a girl. Ericsson saw, too.

"Liar!" he flung at Vannis and made a rush.

Braithwaite moved to intervene, but I stayed him.

"This isn't an affair for Scotland Yard!" I whispered.

The two big men closed together, their muscles gleaming white in the dimness, their heavy breathing audible even above the noise of the wind and sea. The girl screamed. A sudden lurch of the vessel flung her forward and I caught her just in time to prevent a fall. She smiled up at me weakly.

"You came," she gasped, "but almost too late!"

Clelia clung to me, her eyes wide, watching the fight. And, God! such a fight! Circling, clinching, striking with almost super-strength, the two giants struggled over the deck. One moment they rolled on the slimy floor, the next they were up, circling and sparring again. No one intervened. When two men fight for a woman intervention is useless. But I thought it would never end. In the darkness I could see the faces of the men smeared with blood. Something dark was dripping from their lips.

At an unexpected sideward roll of the schooner they were flung to the deck. I caught the flash of something bright, saw an arm upraised. Clelia screamed. I was too frightened to make a sound. But the arm never fell. With a leopard-like leap the man on the bottom got to his feet, and I saw Sigurd Vannis retreating slowly to the low stairs that led to the deck above the cabin. The knife lay under Ericsson's feet.

"You ——!" Ericsson screamed.

The two men came together again on the deck above the cabin. For a moment they seemed one, then the roar of a bull ape burst from Ericsson's throat. I saw him literally lift the clawing Vannis above his head! Leaning forward he flung the body outward. For an instant Ericsson tottered on the edge of

the deck, endeavoring to regain his balance, then plunged down past the side of the vessel into the water.

Clelia screamed. She tore herself from my grasp. Too late I divined her purpose. Like a flash she crossed the deck, hung suspended above the railing, then vanished. I reached the side of the ship in time to see her disappear beneath the water.

"Clelia! Clelia!" I screamed.

I saw Ericsson's face appear above the water, the golden hair of his girl clutched tightly in his fist. The face of Clelia, too, came to the surface, then they both sank again. A wave broke and rolled over the spot where they disappeared.

VI

THE following night the telephone in my room at the Cecil rang. It was Braithwaite.

"Hello, this you, Lombard? . . . I've just come from the hospital. Ericsson's been conscious for nearly five hours and he's sitting by her bed watching like a hawk."

"Do you think she'll pull through?"

"The wound on her head where the life-belt struck her is about the only thing serious."

"When will I see you again?"

"Are you going to leave for America tomorrow as you planned?"

"No, I hardly think I'll go that soon—"

"I knew you wouldn't," he said laughingly. "The spell of London's got you!"

"Where are you dining this evening?"

"Nowhere in particular."

"What about taking me to the quiet little place in Soho that you told me about? You know, they say Soho is about the only *really* quiet spot in London. . . . And I *do* feel like I would thoroughly enjoy a *quiet* evening!"

Men

By Viola Brothers Shore

1

First
Came Jay
The tall, dark Southerner
I met while visiting
Away from home.
He was the only man
For me
Until he came
To my home town.
He was afraid
To go in swimming
And when I saw him
Stand
In bathing togs
Beside my Billy
Who lived next door—
I decided
To live without him.

2

And next came Ted—
I worshipped him.
He was so handsome
And
His kisses . . .
Well,
He was my God.
But once he lied
To me
And I found out.
The gods may lie
But they must never
Never
Be found
Out.

3

John was my dentist,—
We were really

S.—May—7

Good—good friends.
And a little
Flame
Of love
Sprang up between
Us
And died down—
Leaving us really
Good—good friends.

4

There was a doctor
I could have liked
But he wanted
Money—
As if it were not
Enough
To be a doctor's
Wife
Without having
To pay
For it!

5

There was a married man
Of course—
There always is—
And his wife did not
Understand him
Of course.
And when I would not
Do as he wanted
I did not
Understand him
Either
So he went and looked for
Somebody else!

6

And there was Sid—
He used to say

"You little devil
I'll get you yet!"
And I was afraid
He would—
He was so homely—
But he
Didn't.

7

And there was Rob—
Always ready
To die
Of devotion.
I never cared
For him
Till he commenced
To rush my chum
And then it was
Too late!

8

And next came Ned—
Who played lawn tennis
Like a dream
And always wore
Such clean
White pants.
Only he was

A philanderer—
And one is enough
In any family.

9

There was a man
I liked so much
Because he had
A sense of humor.
But he was
A rabbi
And I had
A sense of humor
Too.

10

And then one day
My Billy
Who lived next door
Came back
From the West
And married
Me.
And do you know
I've gotten so
I really believe
He is the only man
I ever loved!



The Things a Woman Can Do

By Karl W. Kessler

MAKE a man enjoy the sensation of being robbed.

Break a capitalist, drive a strong man to drink and make the janitor smile.

Kiss and hate a man at the same time.

Get the most of anything by giving the least.

Commit murder and be praised for it. And pitied for her helplessness!

Become famous because of her ankles, the dimples on her arm, or the suit she enters against a wealthy man.

The Last Job

By Harold de Polo



HERE was a noticeable stir in the coach as the train slowed down at Ossining—a lowering of periodicals, a craning of necks, an atmosphere of waiting for the curtain to go up. The watchers became tense as the characters they hoped would appear on the scene did so. There were only two—a slim, tall man who held his head brazenly high as he walked firmly ahead, a slim, tall girl who held to his arm almost grimly, and certainly proudly. They climbed the steps with what could be termed arrogance, and passed down the aisle quite oblivious of the nudging and twisting and low whisper-murmurs. They chose the foremost seat, up near the water cooler where there was most foot-room. Then the man turned deliberately, and gave a last long look of implacable hate at the receding station; but the woman's eyes went to his face, and her free hand shot forward with a jerky little movement and took its place beside the other on his arm. He turned about again, at that, and one of his long-fingered, too-white hands covered her own as he stared stonily before him.

The woman's face flamed, as the train gathered speed, with a joy that could not be repressed. Her eyes blinked, and she brushed away a glad tear, as her fingers dug into the coat-sleeve:

"Oh, Jim—*my Jim*," she breathed, "it's so good to—"

They were the first words either had

spoken since they had met at the gate and simply gripped hands and looked into each other's eyes,—yet a quick little frown furrowed Jim Knowles' forehead as he negatively shook his head. And Kitty McAlister kept silent, holding to his arm, knowing full well that he did not feel equal to expressing the relief of freedom—of freedom from those four ghastly years behind stone and iron. . . .

They showed on him plainly—horribly, she thought. The inanimate whiteness of the skin struck her first, and then the greyness sprinkled so profusely through the hair that had been so crisply black. There were lines, too, rutted deep into the cheeks, and the finely chiseled lips, once so straight, drooped at the corners. His nose seemed sharper—and it had always been sharp—and he had a new trick of breathing so that his nostrils quivered. It reminded her of the infinitely trained-down race horse, impatiently waiting for action. Only his grey-flecked brown eyes remained the same; and yet, immediately, she told herself that they also had changed. They were what she had always loved most, those eyes, and yet she knew that she loved them more now—hungered for them to look on her. True, the bluish rings under them accentuated their largeness, their fire, their rebellion, but Kitty saw in them a new antipathy, an almost rabid hate, for the world and its conventions. . . . She found herself comparing his face to that of some wild creature, suddenly loosed from

galling thralldom, savagely seeking vengeance! . . .

She sighed unconsciously—but killed it half-way before he should see. Yes, his eyes frightened her, saddened her, crushed her hopes,—and still; for the very peril they spoke of for him, she could not help loving them with renewed fervor. They meant, though, that Jim retained, only with an added passion, his fierce love of opposing custom and law. She had prayed, too, that perhaps those four terrible years might change him, that perhaps they were to at last have the longed-for, restful haven. But his eyes said "no," and again she sighed—rosignedly. After that she stayed staring unseeingly before her, as he was. So they both sat, without a word, without a movement, until New York was reached.

The convict did not speak, either, as they walked along the interminable station corridors and out into the brisk spring sunshine. Silently, he allowed himself to be led to a taxi, asking no word as to where they were going, and the fact that he so implicitly relied upon her sent a glad thrill through Kitty. During the journey uptown, too, Jim Knowles sat rigid, staring out of the window with his eyes very big. Occasionally his hands would clench and unclench, and he would rub the fingers tentatively. Indeed, he did not say a word until they were safely alone and away from all prying onlookers, in the cosily furnished little apartment Kitty had rented. He glanced feverishly about the home-like, cheery, living room. Then, with a surge of mad relief, he suddenly lifted his arms and stretched them far out:

"Christ—*Christ*," he breathed hoarsely—and it was not meant as an oath.

Characteristically, the mood left him instantly. He turned abruptly, and with a literal leap he took Kitty in his arms. His face softened, his eyes were

tender, and he kissed her carmine lips longingly. His hands reverently stroked her golden hair, and he looked into her eyes as he murmured his worship for her. He released her suddenly, and swept his arm about the room:

"But this, Kitty?" he asked. "I thought the money would be gone?"

"Jim," she answered him, and her frank blue eyes could not help showing pride, "I didn't touch a penny of it. I—"

"Kitty," he cried. "You prince—and little idiot at the same time!"

"No, Jim, I got a job—back at the same old manicure game. I was saving the bank account," she went on, her eyes looking right into his, "to give us a new start with!"

But she met with the defiance she had expected. His eyes shone almost angrily, and that lean, cruel look came over his face:

"No, Kitty—*no!* And you're crazy to think of it, especially now! . . . God, don't you think I want to make someone pay for those rotten years? Don't you think I'm longing and longing to get my finger on a combination again? Don't you think I want to show that damned police crowd that they can't get me twice? . . . I don't want to give up yet. Lord," glancing at a mirror, "I may look old, but I'm still young—*young*, I tell you. Thirty-three. Oh, no, they may have put the lines on my face and the grey in my hair, but they haven't broken the old spirit yet. I'll show 'em!"

Kitty McAlister's eyes dwelt on him, lovingly, sadly. She knew that pleading would do little good; anyway, it was not quite the time to try, yet. He had not run the gamut of his emotion. So she sat wisely silent.

"Oh, no, Kitty," he went on gaily, an infinitesimal tinge of color showing in either prominent cheekbone, "don't think of *that stuff*. You needn't worry,

'cause they're not going to get me again. Oh, no, and I'll show 'em that I've still got the slickest fingers in New York—or in the world—at getting to any safe ever made. Cheer up, girlie. Lord, I tell you the next haul I make will fix us for life. It'll be so big you'll gasp. I won't touch only the greatest. Cheer up—look merry!"

He stood before her, arms akimbo, looking down at her with a smile on his face that somehow miraculously chased away those four hard years up the river. She did not answer his smile, and her blue eyes became very stern.

"Jim," she said firmly, "I mean it! I want you to give it up. You know I never liked it; you know I've always longed for the farm we've spoken of—or that I've spoken of. Jim, I'd hoped and prayed that after this—this thing—you'd change. I haven't had just *fun* while you were—away, Jim. It—it isn't fair to me if you keep at it!" She paused, just for an instant, and blinked away a single tear: "Yes, Jim," she continued, with the least choke, "I've hoped and prayed you'd give it all up and—and marry—and make a start—the way we've said we might—some day!"

What Kitty termed his "fighting face" came to Jim Knowles. It grew older—as it had even before the lines had been there—and his eyes seemed to lose their brown and turn to grey—cold grey. He apparently talked through closed lips, tautened so that they were pale pink:

"Listen, Kitty," he told her, in that too-even voice, "you know we've talked over most of that business before this—and not only *once*! You know what I think of that marriage game—bunk! That's not saying I don't love you; you know I *do*! All that's the matter with you is that your nerve is shaken, you can't help thinking they'll get me

and send me up again. Now forget it! They're not going to! . . . But wait—wait. Maybe that farm and the other stuff will come through. But wait!"

"I know, Jim," she faltered weakly, already beaten, "but—"

Jim Knowles laughed, his eyes flashing with that reckless glint as he held out his arms:

"Come here, Kitty, and don't be a fool. Hell—get out my dinner duds and rig yourself up. Let's go out and let me have the first real meal in years, with all the fixings. Tonight's the night, girlie, and we're going to celebrate!"

She came to his arms, readily enough and he stilled her lament with the hot, soul-searing kisses she loved. He released her slowly, and held her off in front of him with a hand on either shoulder:

"Kitty," he said, smiling, "there's one thing I was going to tell, but you didn't give me time. Maybe that dream about the farm and the rest of it will come true pretty soon. I've decided to do just one more job—and that's all. I mean it. I'll be careful, too, that it's a cinch. There—I'm promising!"

And Kitty McAlister hummed over all the gay little tunes she knew as she dressed for dinner.

* * * * *

Kitty's spirits stayed at high-water mark for the next two months or so. Jim was continually in the light, youthful mood that made him seem like a boy, and it was not long before he looked his old self. He scarcely ever mentioned his "work," apparently fully enjoying to the limit the sheer living of life. They played gloriously—the theatre, restaurants, dancing—so much so that Kitty occasionally sighed as she looked at the rapidly decreasing bank figures. Still, she had her Jim

—had him safely and without a worry.

She was more thankful than ever, now, that he had always so scrupulously refrained from mixing with others in his profession. He had rigidly played a lone hand, refusing to listen to the most tempting offers. He did jobs without help, and he did them well. His recently finished term in Sing Sing had been his first, and that was because he had grown careless, perhaps, through the years of such easy triumph. But it had taken a good man to get him, there was consolation in that for them both. Yes, Jim had made a big mistake in failing to give Terry Neall due credit. Had he been just a *bit* more cautious? . . .

After a couple of months of idleness, Kitty noticed that drawn look coming over his face and that wilder, fiercer look into his eyes. Too, he became quieter. He spoke less; stayed at home more; sat thinking; caressed for hours his sensitive fingers. The boy had completely left him, and the bitter, cruel man had taken his place. Jim Knowles was nervous for action. She knew the signs more than well.

She said not a word, but she did a deal of hoping and praying. Once, when the agony was great, she questioned him as to whether he had as yet discovered his prospect. And the answer had sent a chill through her:

"No—but I saw Terry Neall today!"

"Oh, Jim, Jim," she cried, "*won't* you give it up? *Won't* you let's make a new start in some new place? . . . We've still got enough! We can surely make good! . . . Oh, Jim, dear, *please* give it all up!"

It was an ill omen, as she instantly realized, that he did not cut her short. He simply sat smiling at her—that easy, confident smile she knew so well. He always wore it before he tackled

any job; he was always so cool, and smiling, and different. He had the bearing now.

"Dear old girl," he drawled, "*you do* worry a lot about the unimportant things! . . . Sure I saw Neall, and he sort of reminded me of you. Went in and had a drink with him. Advised me to quit the game—and what do you think? And marry you. Said I'd make a respectable citizen if I'd settle down on the straight and narrow! . . . Nice boy, Neall. White man. He got me fair and I don't hold it against him—but he won't get me the *second* time, you can gamble!"

Again her worry was kissed away, and again life went on as serenely as possible—for a few days!

Then he came in, one evening, and just brushed her lips before drawing the big armchair up to the window and lolling back in it. He sat without a word, smoking cigarette after cigarette. He occasionally chuckled—a short, grim sort of chuckle—and did the trick of fondling his fingers.

Kitty McAlister knew that the time had come. Her face was suddenly haggard as she came and stood before him, looking into his eyes with a certain hopeless sadness. She spoke just a single word:

"Well?"

He raised his head slowly, his narrowed eyes seeming entirely grey—and colder than ever she had known. He almost bit out his speech through those tautened lips:

"Cinch! Old Weiner—the picture dealer,—dirty old miser. Grabbed forty thousand—too late to bank. Some famous painting. Took the money home with him—over on the edge of Montclair. Safe's so easy it's a crime. So cheap he only keeps one servant. Cinch—cinch!"

She started to expostulate—to plead, to rail, to do *anything*—but Jim rose

abruptly, with that decisive air she knew there was no denying:

"Come on—might as well eat decently! . . . And don't forget that dream may be coming true!"

This time Kitty McAlister, though she gave in, did no joyous humming!

* * * * *

Kitty clung to him desperately as he placed her in a taxi, after dinner, before going over to finish his last job. He always was this way; starting out for a place fully three or four hours before he intended robbing it. He boasted—and justly—that he was practically impossible to trail. Nevertheless, the woman who loved him felt an odd, insistent sense of tragedy. True, she was as a rule nervous when he had been about his work—but never like this. Something seemed to be drilling and drilling it into her that disaster would again come tonight! . . .

The thought of waiting in the little apartment, alone, was too much to bear. One of Broadway's blazing signs, standing out above the others and heralding some movie star that always promised excitement, caught her eye. Stopping the machine, she sprang out and hurriedly procured a ticket. Perhaps it would make her forget; not exactly forget, of course, but help to pass the time.

She stayed somewhat less than five minutes. The picture, ironically, happened to be a detective and cracksman affair—the latter bound to get the worst of it. She felt a chill go through her, and walked swiftly, blindly, when she got out into the air.

She telephoned the two friends she possessed whom she could rely on in a crisis—and both were out. She looked in shop windows, but she actually saw nothing but a blur—a blur that had behind it, always, a ghastly picture of Jim, in stripes. And finally, though she dreaded the apartment in

solitude, she dreaded more this aimless wandering. So she got into another taxi and went home. . . .

Kitty had known it would not be necessarily easy there—but she had not known to what an extent she would suffer. Every article of furniture, every insignificant little object, reminded her of Jim. Still that idea drilled through her—drilled and drilled. Something would happen tonight—and that something was disaster. She tried to calm herself, she assured herself that it was nerves alone—but it did no good. That silent, insistent voice kept whispering that he was in grave danger. . . . She stood it for an hour, for two hours—and then, when she felt that she would go utterly mad, she acted!

Hastily she entered her bedroom and took a long, simple black coat from the closet. Donning this, she stuck a small turban on her head and pinned on a heavyish veil. Then, for the first time since she had owned it, she got the first present Jim had ever given her from an almost forgotten box—a small, intricately silver-chased pistol. Slipping the thing into her pocket, she hurried from the apartment. . . .

Kitty McAlister made record time. To be exact, in an hour and twelve minutes she was at the Weiner house on the outskirts of Montclair. What is more, she had covered her trail in a manner that she believed would have been worthy of Jim. Too, she shortly discovered the window by which he had entered, and she was not long in following suit.

Inside the darkened room she stood for a moment listening intently. No sound came to her, and she groped her way toward an outlet. Once in the hallway she again listened—and still nothing came to her. Cautiously she climbed a flight of stairs—and then her heart gave a great leap!

She heard a voice—and it was not the voice of Jim or of Weiner or of the old servant. It was the voice of the man she instantly realized as Terry Neall:

"Well, Jim Knowles," he was saying, "got you again, eh?"

Jim did not answer—the detective was silent—and no revolver shot came. It must mean that he was—captured!

With the lithe, noiseless tread of a panther she climbed the stairway, and as she reached the landing a flood of light streaked from an open doorway. Through the aperture she saw what had happened. Jim was kneeling by the safe, apparently having just opened it; standing perhaps a dozen feet away, with his weapon levelled, was the hunter! . . .

"No, Jim,"—the detective was speaking—"you haven't ever given me enough credit. I managed to see you at Weiner's this afternoon—I'll admit *that* part was bull luck. However, when I learned he'd sold a big thing and was lugging the money home, just took a gamble. Anyway, I trailed you—and I'll give you the credit to say it was no easy merry-go-round. I did it, though, and here I am—and here you are—and that's all!"

Kitty got busy with a rush. Staying in the shadow she aimed her firearm at a point between Neall's shoulder blades:

"No, Terry Neall," she said, her voice so firm and even that it surprised herself, "that *isn't* all!"

She saw Jim's eyes widen with surprise, but he scrupulously kept them glued to Neall's face.

The detective himself showed the stuff he was made of. He did not move a muscle, and his voice came calmly:

"Maybe not, ah—Kitty McAlister. But don't be foolish and shoot. The moment that trigger moves, even if it

kills me, Jim Knowles will get my bullet clean through his brain!"

Jim's face was hard—very hard. He kept his eyes, without a flicker, on Neall—ready to spring at the least chance. The other man gave him none:

"Don't get cocky, Miss McAlister," he drawled. "Knowles is my prisoner and he's coming with me. Sorry, but it's my job and it's got to be done!"

"Terry Neall," returned the woman, her voice still holding that deadly even quality, "you're making a mistake. Jim's coming with me! I'm not bluffing, and I think you are. You see, you don't know just what it means to me. I've given my life to Jim. I've thrown away every ideal about honesty I ever had. I've hated the work he's done, I've loathed it—but I put all that aside. I loved him—and I love him—better than anything else in the world. I've had enough hell—and especially I've had enough of it these last four years—and I won't go through it again. I think you know, Terry Neall, when you meet a woman that's telling the truth. And I'm saying now that if I have to kill you to do it, Jim Knowles won't go back to jail with you again!"

Possibly Jim's eyes grew bigger; possibly pride and savage daring came into them. Withal, he still shrewdly kept them on his antagonist.

The detective was quiet for a short moment, and then he spoke—but first he backed slowly to the wall:

"Don't shoot, Miss McAlister—and don't *you* make a mistake. Wait, I know you're not bluffing,"—he was partly eyeing her—"and I think you know now that I'm not. I realize you want to get Jim away—I realize you'd kill to do it. On the other hand, I've got him covered cold. It's a sort of a hopeless triangle—you get me and I get him, I get him and you get me. I'm playing straight, see—and I'm putting it straight. Now," he smiled,

"what in the deuce are we going to do about it?"

Kitty looked him squarely in the eyes and was forced to say that he seemed a man, every inch. He was slight, quick as a cat, with a pair of honest blue eyes—not so unlike her own—that looked you over with a blink. Surely, too, that firm mouth and sharpened jaw meant what they said.

"Mr. Neall," she said slowly, "all I know that we're going to do about it is one thing. . . . Jim's coming with *me*—not going back to Sing Sing!"

For the first time the safe-breaker spoke. He smiled one of his dry smiles:

"Hmmm. I don't seem necessary to consult, do I?"

Neall still had his gun on him; he still had both of them under his eye; and he didn't hear the question, for all his answer. Kitty, neither, paid any attention. Each realized that the battle was between themselves:

"Yes, Terry Neall," she said quietly, "he's coming with *me*—and not with you!"

The detective's eyes, though he could not be accused of exhibiting laxness, were a bit far-off in their expression. A faint smile, too, persisted in turning the corners of his lips. It was rather a whimsical smile, at that. He said nothing.

"Mr. Neall," Kitty went on, "we've got to decide quickly. I know Jim's ways, and that Weiner and his servant he's chloroformed may show signs of life soon and make it what *you'd* call interesting. I'm not afraid of anything else, for I knew you're as bad as Jim on one point—you always play alone, dead alone. Now, am I going to take him out of here with your consent, or have I got to kill you? I don't care if *you* kill Jim in the bargain. I've just made up my mind that he

won't go to Sing Sing. Please decide!"

Terry Neall surveyed them both for a long, long minute, that odd smile broadening:

"Kitty McAlister," he said finally, "I'll tell you. First get over the idea that I'm backing down—but I think you're wise enough woman to know I'm not. This is my game, this is my life—this hunt business. Maybe it isn't all fun, I'm not saying. Maybe, even, I wasn't so—so damned glad to send Jim up the first time. Anyway, it's my job and it's my duty! Get that! . . . I'll tell you. I've always liked a brave woman—and I've always liked a brave man. And again, I don't think Jim Knowles at heart is an out and out crook—no, he isn't! There's one thing I think he *is*—I think he's a man who'd keep his word, once he'd given it. I'm taking that from my own observations, and not only from what I've heard about him. Well, now, all right—and here's my proposition: If Jim Knowles gives me his word of honor that he'll turn straight—that he'll never pull another crooked deal—he can walk out with you as free as air!"

He paused, and watched them both shrewdly. Jim Knowles flushed—flushed and averted his eyes. Kitty, indeed, came near forgetting her weapon—and it took Terry Neall to remind her of it:

"You see," he drawled, "I almost might have had you then, if I'd been playing! . . . But here, this has got to be decided. If you don't agree, I swear by everything I hold sacred that I'll pump Knowles full of lead, even if you'll do the same to me. If you give me your word, though, you can walk out with the woman who I think is one of the finest. There's only one thing I ask—only one proviso I make, if you want to call it that. It's that you, Jim Knowles, get rid of your damned fool ideas and marry Kitty

McAlister—marry a woman that millions of men would be proud and glad and lucky to have love them. There, that's my talk—and that's the last word I'm saying. You've got blamed little time to decide before I start trying to take you back. Miss McAlister, go right to it. Say what?"

Kitty did not answer him. Instead, she looked at Jim Knowles—looked at him with wild hope as she once more placed herself entirely in his hands.

He met her eyes squarely, though his cheeks were flushed and his embarrass-

ment showed. But it was he, who replied to honest Terry Neall:

"Neall," he said, putting out his hand, his face literally crimson now, "if you'll take my hand, man to man, you'll know that I mean it when I say I give my word never to crack another safe and to marry the finest woman in the world!"

The detective didn't waste a fraction of a second in gripping the offered hand; also, neither did he waste a fraction of a second in turning his back as Kitty rushed for Jim with a glad, joyous cry that meant the dreams of years had come true!



A War Memory

By Frederick Moxon

WHEN I was over there in France
Driving an army ambulance,
I sang a song and took my chance.

I took my chance and sang a song,
For war is foul, but youth is strong,
And life is sweet, and death is long.

Yes, life and love alike are sweet,
And by the well we used to meet,—
Myself, and pretty Marguerite.

In southern vale the village lay,—
("Hell's Road" a thousand worlds away),
And there was rest and holiday.

A church there was with chiming bell,
And moonlight silence by the well
Where whispering poplar-shadows fell.

I tried my French each little while,
And Marguerite, with puzzled smile,
Our meanings tried to reconcile.

But Love be praised! and thank the Fates!
One thing for no translation waits:
Her kisses "talked United States."

The Comet and the Star

By Louise Winter



NEVA LLOYD stepped from the dramatic stage, where she had won an enviable position as a promising young actress, to the screen, and in less than six months she had firmly established herself in the front ranks of moving-picture favorites, but Tom Collinge became famous overnight.

Collinge was an automobile salesman and, for a bet, he drove one of the firm's cars in a sensational race from Niagara Falls to New York. Camera men snapped him up along the route, and when he made a spectacular finish at Columbus Circle he good-naturedly consented to pose so that the public could get a glimpse of his handsome face decorated with a broad smile of triumph.

A motion-picture director happened to be passing and seeing young Collinge's possibilities offered him a staggering sum to do a picture.

Collinge laughed at the offer. "Quit your fooling," he said, shaking his curly head. "I don't know the first thing about acting!"

"You don't have to," returned Hyams promptly. "You haven't a trace of self-consciousness and you're a type that screens well."

Collinge frowned. He saw that the man was in earnest, but it seemed to him that it was rather a contemptible thing to make money by your personal appearance and not by hard work. "Couldn't think of it," he said, and this time his voice contained conviction.

That night, however, when he and

the only girl in the world were dining at Shanly's to celebrate his victory, he related the occurrence.

"And the man was so persistent that I had to promise to think it over before I could get rid of him," he concluded.

Elsie Collinge's eyes opened to their widest extent. "Who was he?" she asked quickly.

"Albert Hyams." Collinge tossed over a card. "Ever hear of him?" He liked the pictures well enough, but Elsie was a fan.

She nodded. "He's Neva Lloyd's director, and what he says with the Paradox people goes," she explained, and there was a slight trace of awe in her voice.

"Neva Lloyd!" Collinge chuckled. "Hyams said he wanted me in her new picture."

Elsie leaned forward. Suddenly she saw possibilities in the offer. "And what did you say?" she demanded.

"Say? Why, I said no, of course. You wouldn't want me to be a movie actor, would you?"

"They get awfully big salaries."

Collinge's face fell. "Perhaps, but is money everything? I'm making five thousand a year with the Stone people, and we get along pretty well on that."

"You could make fifty thousand just as easily."

"By selling myself." He was disappointed in Elsie. He had related the incident, thinking that she would see the joke as he had seen it. He had never dreamed that she would wish him to consider such an offer.

"You're selling yourself now at a very small price. You see what brains alone are worth. If you used your brains, however, in connection with your good looks—and don't scowl like that, Tom Collinge, of course you know you're good looking—you could easily make a fortune. The movies aren't like the ordinary stage, you don't merely have to speak your lines well, you have to know how to ride and drive and swim and do all sorts of athletic stunts. It's fearfully exciting! Besides, they're going to show your picture on the screen driving the Stone and you're not making a fuss about that." She saw all there was to be made out of the flattering proposal and also a certain amount of glory accruing to herself as the wife of a successful movie star.

The frown deepened on Collinge's face and the carefully ordered dinner suddenly lost its savor. He and Elsie had been married for over a year and he had learned by now to recognize a certain hardness in her nature. She was only twenty-two and she looked like a kitten with her fluffy ash-blond hair, her long sleepy blue eyes and her little red mouth, but underneath her seeming docility was a curious determination to have her own way regardless of whose feelings she trampled on in order to obtain it.

He wished now that he had kept the incident to himself, but it was too late for regrets and he must steel himself to fight the greed he saw growing in Elsie's eyes.

But between dominant people like Albert Hyams and Elsie he was wax, and in spite of his reluctance to taking up work that he thought lacked dignity, in less than a month he was signed up as a Paradox star.

The novelty of it was not without interest, for as Elsie had pointed out the acting was not all done within doors and the thrills of his first picture were

real to him. His principal objection was to the love-making for he was a clean-minded youngster and loyal to the girl he had married.

"Don't you care if I take Neva Lloyd in my arms and kiss her?" he asked one night, as he came in late. "I'm not made of wood, you know, neither is she!"

But Elsie valued her own attractions too highly to be frightened by his frankness. "She's been kissed by so many men that it's all in the day's work to her," she retorted carelessly.

So Collinge dropped that subject.

At the studio Neva Lloyd made things easy for him. She liked him from the first. He was young and refreshingly unspoiled. He never tried to monopolize the camera and he treated her with unfailing respect. They were about the same age, but he seemed younger.

It was some satisfaction for Collinge to be able to buy the Stone in which he had driven to fame and fortune and he used it for a scene to be staged in the Westchester Hills.

Neva Lloyd watched him drive up the first morning.

"You handle your car so well that some day I'm going to ask you to drive me back to town," she said in the elder-sister tone that robbed their intercourse of all danger.

His brow darkened. "I should drive well. I began as a demonstrator."

"I've heard all about your race," Hyams had played it up to advertise his new star.

"I wish I'd never taken up that foolish bet!" Collinge groaned. This was one of the days when making a monkey out of himself, as he phrased it, irked him.

Neva Lloyd smiled gently. "I can't regret it," she said. "It has given me a very delightful companion to work with."

Collinge felt that he was behaving like a boor. "Miss Lloyd, please forgive me! I'm not belittling your work, but I think I loved selling automobiles quite as much as driving them."

Neva Lloyd had tact. "It's the shaking down process that bothers you. In a short time petty annoyances will seem unimportant. The motion picture drama embraces such a wide field; we reach so many millions who cannot afford the regular theatre; we can teach so many lessons and we can bring joy into so many lives. I try to think of that part of my work, Mr. Collinge, when I get discouraged with its trivial side."

He saw what she wanted him to see and instinctively he straightened up. Her few words reconciled him to his new profession as Hyams' flatteries and Elsie's prophecies had not done.

That night when he and Elsie were dining at the Biltmore he tried to tell her how he now felt about his work.

Elsie, however, was calculating the cost of the sable stole draped across the shoulders of the woman at the next table and she missed most of his speech. But she caught the end and she stared at him incredulously. "Tom, you're a scream! You and Neva Lloyd reforming the world through the movies!" She threw back her head and laughed shrilly.

"I wish you wouldn't take everything as a joke, Elsie," Collinge complained.

"And I wish you wouldn't take yourself so seriously," she retorted. "You ought to be wild with joy. You're getting a huge sum for two pictures and when you finish these you can demand double or get someone to put you at the head of your own company."

"I'm afraid I've made a mistake. All this money isn't getting us anywhere."

"It's buying us pretty good dinners."

"I used to enjoy spaghetti at Olivetti's just as much. None of the old crowd come here."

Elsie shook her head despairingly. "Have you no ambition?"

"Yes, for the things that count. I'm not blaming you, I was tempted and it seemed like easy money, but I wish to God I had my old job back!"

A look of fear swept over Elsie's face. "But you can't give up now!" she said quickly.

"I know it. I'll have to keep my contract for these two pictures at least."

Elsie took courage from that admission. The pictures would stretch over six or eight months and by that time Tom would be so accustomed to luxury that he would not dream of going back to comparative poverty.

There were other days, of course, when he took pleasure in the fact that he could spend money freely. He was naturally conservative for he had been brought up in a frugal household, but he had a generous heart and he gave in to most of Elsie's extravagant demands.

After a time, however, he decided it would be necessary to call a halt. The bills that came in were of alarming proportions.

Elsie had insisted upon their giving up their five room flat and taking a suite at an apartment hotel down town. He had protested at first, but in the end had given in as usual.

One morning he looked up from a sheaf of bills as Elsie came into the living room where breakfast was being served. He frowned as he saw that she was wearing an elaborate negligee of black Chantilly lace over flesh colored Georgette Crêpe.

"See here, girlie, I'm not a Chaplin, you know, and the bills this month are staggerers. We've got to pull up a bit," he said.

Elsie seated herself and dug into her slice of Honey Dew melon. "You should worry! Tom, you've got an

awfully small outlook. I'll bet if you wanted to throw over the Paradox people you could get double with The Feature Films."

"And leave Hyams in the lurch after he's been so decent to us?"

"You mean leave Neva Lloyd."

"Elsie!"

"Tom!" she mimicked him. "Don't forget that you called her a peach when you first began to work with her. I don't mind if your professional admiration slops over a bit, but don't think you are hoodwinking me."

"I can't make you out at all, Elsie. I think the money has gone to your head so that you can't see anything else." Collinge spoke slowly. He refused to answer her preposterous attack. He admired Neva Lloyd tremendously, both as an actress and as a woman, but he loved his wife.

"Money's a very good thing, and you never can have too much of it. As for loyalty to Hyams, do you think he wouldn't knife you tomorrow if he could get someone else as good looking for less money?"

"I do. Men have some sense of honor."

"Not men like Hyams."

"Have you any foundation for that assertion?"

"I'm judging by his past performances. I sit in the side lines and I hear a lot that never gets by to the players."

"And you've heard that Hyams isn't square?"

"Not when it interferes with his own pocket."

"And you think the Feature Films would make it worth my while to break with him?"

"I know it." Elsie's tone was positive. "I've met Colonel Roberts, he's backed the Feature Films, and we've talked of what you could do if you had a free hand."

"Hartley Roberts, president of the

Spruce Tire Company. Where did you meet that rounder?" Collinge asked sternly.

Elsie sighed. She hoped Tom wasn't going to be tiresome. What if Roberts were fast? He was a millionaire and a good spender. "At the Biltmore," she said suddenly.

"Cut him out! I won't have my wife meeting men like that!"

"If I do, will you see the Feature people?"

"No, but if you don't I'll go back to selling automobiles as soon as I finish the new picture."

"You couldn't. You'd hate to give up all this as much as I would! You pose as liking simple things, but I notice you take very kindly to silk pajamas and a fifty-dollar dressing gown."

Collinge stared at the brocaded robe which enveloped his form and he wondered if Elsie were right. He had taken kindly to luxuries, but he had salvaged his conscience by saying to himself that he could give them up tomorrow without a pang.

Elsie's slurs about Hyams made him thoughtful, and that morning as he drove down to the studio he wondered how he really stood with the Paradox director. His doubts, however, were quickly set aside as Hyams greeted him with the news that the company was to be sent down to Palm Beach the following week for the new picture.

On his way to his dressing room he passed Neva Lloyd. "Heard the news? Gee! It makes me feel like a millionaire, Palm Beach in February!" He was boyishly excited over the prospect of his first trip south.

Neva Lloyd smiled indulgently. "Sometimes it is hard to realize that most of our glory is pasteboard. Haven't you ever been to Florida?"

"Indeed not. I couldn't do stunts like that on a salesman's salary. Elsie is going to be delighted."

"So Mrs. Collinge is going with us?"

"You bet she is! I stipulated that in the beginning, no long separations from my wife. She's all the family I have, Miss Lloyd."

"You're lucky to have her." Then Neva Lloyd passed on. She had long since taken Elsie Collinge's measure and she wondered why a heartless little creature like that should have won a real man when other women who would have appreciated a sincere affection went without.

Collinge was right. Elsie was delighted and she promptly plunged into an orgy of shopping in order to have something fit to wear.

He was aghast at the amount of baggage necessary to contain her belongings.

"Five trunks and two hat boxes!" he commented. "What have you got in them?"

"Clothes, you idiot! Lovely, chiffony things! No one is going to take the shine out of me at Palm Beach." She was in high good humor for she had had tea that afternoon with Hartley Roberts and the colonel had vowed that he would follow her to Florida to see that she did not get lonesome while her husband was playing love scenes with Neva Lloyd under the palms.

The Paradox company traveled south in a private car and Elsie went along as a privileged guest. During the trip she managed to antagonize most of the members by her arrogance and she made herself especially disagreeable to Neva Lloyd.

Collinge noticed it and spoke to her. "What have you got against Miss Lloyd?" he asked the first night, after they had retired to their stateroom.

"Principally the fact that she tries to patronize me."

"Nonsense, she's trying to make you feel at home. Naturally, you are out of

your element in a crowd of theatrical people."

"And I prefer to remain so. I don't have to mix with these freaks when we get to Palm Beach."

"Freaks! You are speaking of the people with whom I earn my living!"

"You, not I!" Elsie made the distinction clear.

"But it's your living as well, and you got me into it." Collinge was growing angry.

"I did and sometimes I wonder you're not ashamed to owe it all to me."

"I hadn't thought of it in that way. So I ought to be grateful to you for the chance to make a monkey out of myself with a lot of other freaks!" His face darkened. Elsie seemed to take a delight in irritating him these days.

"Don't fuss tonight, Tom, I'm sleepy." She reached up and encircled his neck with her arm. "There, you're a beautiful thing and I'm proud of you!" She kissed him lightly, but her careless caresses had no power to thrill him in these days.

Women had not entered into the busy automobile salesman's life, but the moving picture actor had frequent opportunities to realize what deep, overmastering passion between men and women meant.

He had searched to the depths of Elsie's shallow nature and had come to the conclusion that she had no more to offer and he must be content with surface affection.

The *dolce far niente* life of the south got under his guard and he plunged into its pleasures with almost as much zest as Elsie did. The idea of ocean bathing in February fascinated him and he spent hours in the surf. Elsie posed on the beach in an abbreviated satin costume, but Neva Lloyd was a strong swimmer and it was she who went out with him beyond the breakers and swam along the coast. It was Neva Lloyd

who bicycled through winding paths with him while Elsie spent her afternoons dancing and again it was Neva Lloyd who initiated him into the joys of motor boating on Lake Worth.

At the Beach Club one night he ran across Roberts. The older man's greeting was friendly but not over cordial so that Collinge had no suspicion that Roberts and Elsie were meeting daily while he was at work or playing with Neva Lloyd.

"My husband warns me that you are a dangerous man," Elsie said the next afternoon as she sipped a bacardi dicky under the cocoanut palms.

"And what about you? Doesn't he realize that you are a constant menace to a man's peace of mind?" Roberts thought he knew every move in the game he was playing, but he had yet to fathom the depth of guile that lay beneath the sleepy blue eyes raised innocently to his.

"Not to yours," she murmured insinuatingly.

"Haven't you drawn me all the way from New York to Florida?"

"I'm not the only attraction at Palm Beach."

"You are as far as I am concerned."

Elsie was content. She had long since measured the situation. Tom was a money maker at present, but the colonel had a solid position in the financial world and her ambition had risen by leaps and bounds since it had been unleashed a few short months ago. Now she saw no reason why she could not deftly fan the flame of the colonel's ardor into the fire that burned before the hymeneal altar.

And unconsciously Neva Lloyd was furthering her plans. The actress was making Collinge content with only occasional glimpses of his wife.

The picture progressed rapidly but it was over two weeks in the making, two weeks during which time Hartley,

Roberts sank deep into the pit which Elsie's subtlety dug for him and in which Collinge turned to Neva Lloyd for comradeship.

He was an ardent fisherman. He had never been able to persuade Elsie to take any interest in the sport but Neva Lloyd was almost as keen about angling as he was.

"When we finish you ought to run down to Miami and get some deep sea fishing," she told him one morning as they came ashore with a creditable catch.

"I'd love it." He turned to her eagerly. "Would you come?"

"With you?" But her smile had no coquetry in it.

"And Elsie, of course. I suppose there's dancing there too."

"I suppose there is but you ought to go alone. Deep sea fishing is a man's sport."

"You've taught me that a woman can share in a lot of sports that I once thought belonged solely to men." His admiring glance took in her slender compact figure with its muscles of steel hidden beneath a seemingly fragile exterior.

"It's only since I've been in the pictures that I've let my natural tomboy inclinations have full sway. I used to think they might count against my feminine charm." Her tone was full of gentle raillery.

"As if anything could do that," he told her warmly.

"Are you trying to flatter me?" she demanded, a slightly worried crease appearing between her eyes.

"No, I'm paying you an honest tribute. You've given me your friendship, Neva, and you can't imagine how I value it." He spoke earnestly for at that time he was not experienced enough to classify his emotions.

But Neva Lloyd saw pitfalls ahead. She dared not admit even to herself

how much Collinge was beginning to mean to her. No other man with whom she had been associated either on the legitimate stage or in pictures had awakened this tender feeling that had a maternal quality about it. Neva Lloyd hated the ugly facts of life. A woman of strong passions she had always held herself in check waiting for the man who would come to mean all the world to her, and now she faced the realization that he had come, but he belonged to another woman and she must neither forget it herself nor allow him to do so.

Collinge was miscast as an actor. His heart was not in his work. He was flashing, meteor-like across the motion picture sky but his trail would be brief. He had too much virility to remain content with make-believe incidents and some day he would go back to the business world that called out his best activities. She saw that clearly but now she wondered if he would go soon enough to spare them both a disillusioning scene.

She spoke now of his former occupation. "Do you ever think of going back to it?" she asked.

"Not now," he returned frankly. "At first I used to, but I guess the lure of wealth has got me, too. Five thousand a year doesn't seem much to me nowadays."

"But you wouldn't remain a five thousand a year man."

"It'd be tough climbing up to the twenty-five thousand class."

"I thought you liked hard work?"

"I thought so myself once."

"I'm hoping you'll see how much better it would be for you. It isn't as if you were a born actor, you know."

Collinge turned puzzled eyes in her direction. "But I'm making good."

"On your face and your figure and your ability to do stunts."

That hurt. It startled him out of the complacent mood into which he had

drifted since he had come south. "I have no real talent?" he asked slowly. "It's just my personal appearance that gets across?"

Neva Lloyd felt like a surgeon facing a delicate operation, but she did not flinch from the task before her though it would probably take this man out of her life. "It's your youth and your good looks and you're too big a man to go on making money out of those things."

He tried to digest her statement. A few months ago he had had her own viewpoint of the situation but of late he had deluded himself with visions of his own glory. "But I'm a Paradox star!" he protested.

Neva Lloyd smiled indulgently. "You're a comet, with a brilliant tail and you never will be a fixed planet in our painted sky, thank heaven for that!"

"It looks as if you wanted to get rid of me."

"If I do, it's for your own good," she said gravely. "Your present work is not conducive to marital happiness. Aren't you conscious of how little you see of your wife?"

His brow darkened. "I don't believe she cares."

"If she's drifting away it's up to you to win her back before it's too late. You wouldn't want to lose her, would you?"

"Of course not." His answer came quickly for he was still a primitive man with fixed ideas of right and wrong and an old-fashioned sense of the sacred claims of duty.

They walked on in silence for a few moments and then he stopped.

"I'm not going in. Elsie went motor boating this afternoon and I think I'll play the dutiful husband stunt and meet her on the dock," he said with an attempt at lightness.

"Good boy!" Neva Lloyd commented. "And get out of pictures soon, Tom,

they're bad for married men who want plenty of time in which to love their wives," she concluded.

Then she went up the steps and into the hotel.

Collinge looked after her admiringly. What a woman, he thought! What a comrade! What a wife, for some lucky man! And then he pulled himself up sharply and compressed his lips as he realized the full danger of indulging in such thoughts.

During the balance of their stay at Palm Beach he devoted every spare moment to Elsie, and as Roberts had gone north after establishing a complete basis of understanding, she accepted his attentions with a malicious tolerance that made him feel as if she saw through his clumsy attempts to simulate an affection which had ceased to exist.

He did not tell her that he had written to the Stone Motor Company until they were on the train, homeward bound. When she heard it she raised her brows significantly.

"What's the idea of bluffing like that? You'd better stick to Hyams, you've lost your chance with the Feature Films," she said contemptuously.

"I've told Hyams I'm through."

"Indeed? And have you and the lovely Neva quarreled?"

"See here, Elsie, keep her name out of this!" His tone was harsh. It was growingly increasingly difficult to retain his temper under Elsie's constant jibes. "These past months have been a nightmare, but we'll wake up soon and find it's all been an ugly dream. Perhaps when we settle down to a sane way of living again, we'll be able to get back our old fondness for each other."

But Elsie refused to reply to that. She merely smiled and opened her book to indicate that as far as she was concerned the matter was not worth talking about.

Just before they pulled into the station Collinge stepped over to Neva Lloyd.

"When we get to New York it's to be good-bye," he said significantly. "But that's what you wanted, wasn't it?" His face was drawn and his eyes were full of misery, but she ignored these signs of suffering and she forced a brave little smile to her lips as she answered:

"Yes, and I wish you all the luck in the world!" She held out her hand and as he took it he realized the truth. Not only had he learned to care but he had taught her to care also.

He turned away abruptly to find Elsie at his elbow.

"Why the long farewell? Won't you see each other tomorrow?" she asked.

"No! I told you I was getting out of the pictures and going back to real life!"

"Dear Tom! You'd be quite bearable if you didn't take yourself so seriously."

He ignored that and then he gathered their hand luggage together and signalled for a porter.

The next morning he rose early and went down town to the Stone Company's office. They welcomed him back and offered him a percentage on his sales which would bring his salary up considerably. Business details took up most of the day, but about five o'clock he went back to the hotel prepared to come to an understanding with Elsie in regard to their future way of living.

They would have to begin on an economical basis, but he looked forward to a few hardships which should absorb him so that he would not have time for regrets.

He was whirled up in the elevator and he let himself into the suite which Elsie had insisted upon and he called to her cheerfully from the entrance hall.

But there was no answer. He passed through the living room into her bedroom, but she was not there and the room had a curiously unoccupied look. There was nothing flung over the chairs, nothing on the bed and the bureau was bare of her numerous toilet articles.

A vague foreboding seized him, but he brushed it aside and went on into his bedroom beyond. There, on the chiffonier, was a large envelope addressed to him in Elsie's irregular hand. He tore it open.

"You fool!" he read. "If you bored me when you were making money how did you think I was going to put up with you when you went back to your old job? I'm going west and when I get my divorce—and don't think you can stop me for you can't—I'm going to marry Colonel Roberts. I'm not going to drag Neva Lloyd into this as I don't want any scandal that will react on me in the position I am soon going to hold. And don't worry over having lost my love. I know now I never loved you. I must have fallen a victim to those good looks of yours which brought you in a nice fortune until you got so ridiculously sensitive. I wish

Neva Lloyd joy of you. I suppose now you'll go back to pictures and star together."

It was a spiteful letter and it poisoned his last tender memory of the girl he had once thought her. She must have laid her plans before she had left Palm Beach and doubtless by this time she was speeding west toward freedom. Now that her step was irrevocably taken he could pity her. She set too great a store on the non-essentials of life, such as money, while the things that really counted were passed contemptuously by. She would be happy when she had attained her selfish desire and she would never miss what she had lightly cast aside. She had never loved him and now he could admit that he had never really loved her. He had loved his dream of her.

He drew a long breath. Some day he would be free to go to Neva Lloyd and put the deep love that filled his heart into words, but he would never go back into pictures. Neva herself had said they were bad for married men who wanted time in which to love their wives, and he wanted the rest of his life to devote to loving her.



How Can the May Be Fair?

By Lizette Luère

HOW can the year swing into May,
How can the May be fair,
When love is buried in a grave,
And Joy is mourning there?

Oh, Woodland white with laurel bloom,
Oh, laughing airs of May,
Your fresh and carefree loveliness,
Must break my heart to-day!

O Woman! Woman!

By M. A. Hitchcock



SAM was very much surprised when he heard of the broken engagement of his friend, Billy, and a charming young woman acquaintance, and condemned Billy when he learned that he was the cause of it.

"I understand that you broke off

the engagement," said Sam. "I don't see how you could treat Florence so shabbily.

"Oh, it wasn't done at all brutally," replied Billy. "I managed it very diplomatically!"

"How?" queried Sam.

"Why," explained Billy, "I just simply told her what my salary is."



One Day in May

By Will Thompson

ONE day in May, of cloudless blue,
You took my hand beside the brook;
And where brown bees the cowslips knew,
Into your eyes you bade me look.


Of cloudless blue the mid-spring sky;
Wild lilies hung their blushing bells
Beside the brook that rippled by;
The crinkled ferns waved in the dells.

One day in May we sought the shrine
That love had made; and where brown bees
Buzzed in the sun, I let you twine
A crown of pale anemones.

I trusted you; you took my hand;
And I was glad, nor felt surprise.
The cowslips knew what May had planned—
You bade me look into your eyes.

The Fool

By Charles Woodstock

F her husband hadn't been such a sheer fool, as she contemptuously dubbed him, Irene Walters might at least have felt a slight qualm for the thing she had done to him. As it was, however, her double betrayal of him instilled in her naught but a feeling of vicious, unalloyed joy—for it would mean that soon, even in a scant few days or so, she could at last leave forever with the man she loved and the man who loved her!

The half dozen years of her marriage, during which each succeeding day had seemed more dull and more dissatisfying than the other, would then be behind her—nothing more than a grim nightmare that would but serve to contrast with the glorious life that would be hers. It was difficult to contain her elation. She felt like calling up several friends and letting them know, like telling the very servants downstairs, like shrieking it aloud to all the world!

But she stilled her emotion and continued sitting quietly in her boudoir, gazing steadfastly and with far-off eyes at her own reflection in the mirror. Presently she smiled—slowly, triumphantly, a bit cruelly. After all, it was Jasper himself who had been his own ruin. For once, though unknowingly and through no absolutely direct fault of his own, he had mentioned just a few brief words of the thing he always kept religiously locked up in the very depths of his soul—his business!

Not that she had wanted, formerly, to hear anything about it. No—Heav-

ens, no! The very word, alone, was enough to send a shiver of repugnance through her. If she were giving a dinner and he were late, it was always that word, "business," that was the excuse; when he had to break an engagement they had made, the same thing was blamed for it; whenever she spoke of new expenditures for the house, or of an elaborate affair, or of some rather costly clothes or jewels, it was always to remain undecided until he saw how "business" was going and how the books would balance at the end of the month!

She didn't know anything about the thing—or didn't want to. Decidedly no. Even if she had, it would have been useless, for Jasper never talked, it was said, to either man or woman in regard to his affairs down in Wall Street. That, in fact, was what had lately made her task so difficult; that was why she had searched through his papers and his pockets; that was why she had carefully, cautiously, cunningly sounded him in reference to his latest deal in the effort to find out just one thing—the name of the stock he intended "unloading" as a surprise and a ruse to an opposing clique!

Again she smiled. It seemed ironic that she, of all people, should finally wish to learn something about that which she had abhorred. However, it was only through this very finding out, her lover had shown her, that they could ever hope to run off and have each other forever and all time. And at last, thank God, it was to come to pass. That very afternoon—perhaps

even now—her husband would receive rather a crushing financial surprise that at the same time would give Roy a small fortune that would take them to a new land and a new life! . . .

For over the last year, now, happiness of a sort had been hers—but a happiness that was tinged with an aching, chafing regret that she might not indulge in it openly. Since that glorious night when Roy Trafford, at a house party up in the Berkshires, had told her that he loved her, she had waited for just this moment. From the very beginning, it seemed, they had both been strongly drawn toward the other. He had told her hotly, passionately, fiercely, that he wanted her and was going to have her—money being the only thing that stood in their way. The want of it, that is.

He was struggling along down in Wall Street, making about enough to enable him to keep up his end and get along passably—but he had no capital or resources behind him, to speak of. She, though married to Jasper Walters, had no fortune in her own right. Therefore, they had but hoped and prayed that the time would come when Roy made a gigantic coup that would give them enough to sail for other lands and spend their days in heavenly idleness, always together. It had seemed more and more hopeless as each day went by—until Roy had learned what he had a scant week ago!

Flushed, excited, jubilant, he had come to her and told her that if she could but discover the name of a certain stock Jasper was intending to load he could make a veritable small fortune. He had gone into the thing fully, but it had all been so much Greek to her. It was something about Jasper doing it as a ruse in order to lower the price so that he himself might get more later at a much lower figure; but, if Roy bought it up, he could come in on the big price

when the time came. Jasper, of course, would be clever enough to sell several different ones—and the point was to learn just which one was important. That, more or less, was all that she understood—all that she wanted to. Roy knew, and that was enough. One thing, however, stood out. Should Roy find out what he wanted, he intended putting in the few thousands he had scraped together, with what he could borrow, and coming out with enough for life for them. And at last—at last, thank God—she had learned! . . .

Jasper, last night, had again indulged in a habit that had formerly been exceedingly annoying—talking in his sleep. He had seemed restless most of the night, tossing about and mumbling incoherently. At first, in anger, she had started to wake him—but then he had suddenly talked fairly clearly, apparently speaking of the deal he intended executing on the morrow. It seemed that he was entirely engrossed with this stock he was going to unload—the F. L. & W., whatever that meant—and had named it repeatedly. With tense body and held breath she had listened, joy madly surging through her as she obtained further and positive evidence that it was the name Roy wanted to know. F. L. & W.—F. L. & W.—. . . How well she knew it! . . .

There had been no sleep for her from then on. With wide eyes and pounding heart she had waited through the night, through the morning, through breakfast—and when Jasper had finally quit the house she rushed to the telephone in her boudoir and told Roy the glad news. At first he had seemed surprised that it was the F. L. & W., but he had chucklingly remarked that "Walters was surely a sly old fox" and had told her that this very day would see him successful and that before many days were over they would be steaming off to start in on their glorious life together! . . .

The following hours had seemed more than treble their time, as with raw nerves she had waited for the telephone message from him at least saying that all was well. God, but how glad she would be never again to see precise, businesslike Jasper. Business. He was clever in that, they said. Well, possibly; but outside of it what a fool he was! Why, he had not even the slightest suspicion of her affair with Roy, although several times she had thought the escapes desperately narrow. No, instead of suspecting, he had occasionally remarked that "young Trafford was certainly a nice, clean chap and that he was glad to see that he dropped in so much and kept her company when her old husband was held down at his desk!" . . . Fool—fool . . .

But when would Roy telephone? Heavens, it was—yes, it was after two already. Why *didn't* he let her know? Certainly he must by this time have finished the important and decisive part! . . . She mustn't be too impatient, though. It was that horrible "business" again, and one *never* knew when *that* would end! . . . Anyway, what difference did a few minutes, or hours, make? Hadn't she waited month after month for just this moment? And it was surely coming soon! Roy—dear, dear Roy! . . .

Indistinctly, she heard the bell below tinkle. She sat up with a start. Was it—could it be—Roy? . . . But, no; he always rang her up first. Still—perhaps . . .

But then, coming the stairs, she heard the soft, even, regular footsteps that she knew so well. She wrinkled her nose annoyed. What was bringing Jasper home so early today? Perhaps—perhaps the business surprise! Then Roy *had* triumphed! . . . But her husband was coming into her boudoir. Already he was at the door. How bothersome! . . .

She smiled her usual mechanical smile when he entered:

"Hello, Jasper," she called out, trying her best to speak quite pleasantly, "and what *under* the sun brings you back from your beloved business at *this* early hour?"

"Oh, nothing in particular," he smiled in return, and, yawning, sat down. "Finished up rather early and felt a bit tired! . . . But why aren't you off at some tea or such stuff?"

She made some trivial remark about feeling slightly played out herself. Heavens, was he going to sit here talking with her for any length of time? She hoped not. Roy, never in the world realizing that Jasper was here at this hour, might ring up at any moment. Out of the corner of her eye, she studied his face closely. No, nothing was there that told of his having received a business surprise. It was cool, calm, serene as always—and just as expressionless. How it got on her nerves, now more than ever—that quiet face and those watery blue eyes—ugh! . . . Yes, he *looked* like a fool—a stupid, awkward, boresome fool!

How different Roy was—young, good-looking, laughing Roy. How deliciously he made love—how happy she was while she was with him—how . . .

She knew that she paled a trifle and that her heart went forward at least several notches. Was—was he going to tell of the blow?

But Jasper's voice broke into her thoughts as he again stretched and yawningly remarked:

"Oh, by the way, Irene. Had rather a bad shock today. Quite upset me. In fact, that's one reason why I came home a bit early!"

"Yes," she managed to ask, quietly solicitous.

He was slow in answering—and it seemed to her as if his watery blue eyes, suddenly grown strangely cold and

darker, were searing into her very soul.

"Young friend of ours," he drawled carelessly, "poor Roy Trafford! Hmmm. Got badly caught on some stock, I hear. Must have got things mixed up, somehow. He's usually passably shrewd!"

He paused deliberately, and how she held up she didn't know. She felt her heart almost stop and her face go deathly white and cold. Her muscles contracted and her fingers stiffened into taut fists as she hid them in the folds of her wrap:

"Re—really?" she asked, her voice sounding very faint and unnatural to her.

Her husband rose, stretched again, and informed her that he thought he'd take a bit of a nap before dinner came around. Then, as if he had suddenly remembered:

"Oh, Trafford? . . . Yes—yes, it's the truth. Poor chap. Bungled everything. Lost every penny he owned as well as a lot he had borrowed on notes, I believe. Ah, I heard that he suddenly quit town—had to, I guess, wasn't healthy for him! . . . Too bad—yes, too bad. Feel very sorry, especially as—ah—especially as I had rather a good day of it myself, you know!"

But she didn't hear a word he said—or she hardly cared, for the moment,

whether he knew it or not. His back was turned and she watched him dazedly, feeling as if she would like to spring on him and tear him to the ground, if for no other reason than to give vent to her disappointment!

Roy—Roy had failed. Something had gone wrong. He was a fugitive. Their dream was over. God—dear God, what agony! . . .

At the door her husband turned. "Oh, Irene," he called out, his voice peculiarly quiet.

She looked up. His face was no longer calm and serene and—stupid. Instead, there was an expression of demoniacal cunning and fiendish satisfaction in his every feature that caused her to unconsciously shudder:

"By the way," he drawled, his every word a slow and poignant sting, "I believe that I indulged in my old habit of talking in my sleep last night, didn't I? . . . But never mind now, dear girl; I'll speak of that later, after my little nap—about that and several other little matters that I want settled up!"

With a cruel smile and low laugh he was gone—and with him, Irene knew, was gone her lover as well as the husband who had formerly been at least available as a means of support!

Fool—fool? . . . God! *She* was the fool! . . .



My Friend

By Karl R. Coolidge

I HAVE always felt that Tom was my best friend.

Only the other day I, as a married man, gave him a few instructions about the proper procedure in making love to a woman.

Today I find that Tom used this information so successfully that he has persuaded my wife to elope with him.

Now I know that Tom is my best friend.

Her Horrible Revenge

By Terrell Love Holliday



“DEAR? Maurine?”

“Umph!” grunted Mrs. Ammizun, sleepily shaking off the trembling hand that clutched her arm.

“Maurine—” Mr.

Ammizun’s teeth were rattling audibly now—“please wake up. I just know there’s a woman under the bed.”

“Oh, the devil! You’ve been certain of that two or three nights a week ever since we were married. I suppose I’ll have to crawl out in the cold to satisfy you.”

“If you will, dear. I simply can’t go to sleep until I know.”

“Where’s my gun and flashlight?” growled the head of the house.

Mr. Ammizun drew them from beneath the pillow, holding the weapon as if it were a loathsome and dangerous bug.

“Thunderation! Bertie, why don’t you put your shoes where I won’t step on them?”

From away down under the covers Mr. Ammizun sent an apology, and waited breathlessly, as he always did.

“Hey, you hussy! Come out of there, or I’ll blow a hole through you.”

“Mercy!” shuddered Ammizun, retreating farther beneath the covers. “There *is* one. What if she should hurt Maurine? She’d b-better not. I’ll scratch her eyes out.”

“Throw up your hands!”

“I can’t,” peevishly replied the bur-

glaress. “I have a tight-sleeved waist under this sweater.”

“I suppose,” cuttingly remarked Mrs. Ammizun, “that you started home with a club stew and wandered in here by mistake?”

“No,” responded the intruder, not to be outdone in facetiousness. “My chauffeuress not only is particular to deposit me at the right door, but she takes me in and puts me to bed.”

“Then, how do you account—”

“Oh, I heard that your husband was always expecting to find a woman under the bed, and I thought I could save him one disappointment. No doubt he has had many since he married you,” mocked the burglaress.

“Bertie! Get up and call the police, before I shoot this brazen jade.”

“My dear!” protested Ammizun. “In pajamas!”

Mrs. Ammizun tossed him a dressing gown and shifted round to shield him from the strange woman’s gaze while he donned it.

“You! My Bertie!” cried the burglaress, when she saw his face.

“Myrillal!” Ammizun, clutching at the dressing-table for support, stared at the ghost of his past.

“So *you* are the woman who stole my lover while I was fighting for my country in a foreign land,” hissed the burglaress.

“I—” rejoined Mrs. Ammizun, returning the bareful glare—“married the poor, deluded boy you left behind you.”

Suddenly the burglaress leapt for-

ward, seized her rival's wrist and, after a brief struggle, gained possession of the gun.

"Sit down."

Mrs. Ammizun sat and was tied fast to the chair.

"Now," Myrilla thrust the pistol into her bloomer pocket and held out her arms to her erstwhile lover. "Come away with me, dear," she pleaded. "I have enough laid by for two."

"You forget," said Bertie with quiet dignity, moving nearer to his wife.

"Prude!" sneered the burglaress. "You know you love me."

He remained silent.

"You do," boasted Myrilla. "And she noticed your hesitancy in denying it."

"I do not," he disputed, paling. Visioning what the future held, he was, for an instant, tempted to flee the wrath to come. But the precepts of a pure and noble father restrained him. He shook his head.

"What's to hinder my taking you?" Myrilla caught him roughly and held him so close that her hot breath fanned his plump pink cheeks.

"No woman," he said simply, realizing that only an appeal to her chivalry could save him, "will dishonor the man she really loves."

Myrilla's arms dropped. "Forgive me," she whispered, caressing him with her eyes. "As for you—" she turned to Mrs. Ammizun, who writhed helplessly in her chair—"this shall be my revenge."

Snap went the light switch.

"Please, oh, *please don't!*" sounded Bertie's pleading voice.

Smack! Smack! The lights came on again.

"You never will know—" taunted the burglaress, departing—"whether or not your husband, instead of merely submitting to my kisses, *reciprocated.*"



Explanation

By Virginia Biddle

YOUR face was like a wild flower,
I could not break the spell;
And so I kissed you in your bower,
And told you fairy tales an hour,
And breathed a light farewell.

And if I loved you for a day,
As summer loving goes,
—My love was Will o' Wisp and gay
As April gold upon the spray,
Or rain upon the rose!



Edited by Alice Glenister

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG once again takes his brush "in hand" to paint the cover for SAUCY STORIES this month—this time he gives us his ideal of Florence Dixon, of whom it is said, "She is the most photographed girl in America," and probably you have by this time met Miss Dixon on the screen, as she was starred in one of the latest James Montgomery Flagg Comedies that Paramount are releasing, titled, "Independence B'Gosh!" Remember? She had the part of maid to Sara, wife of Horatio Whiffle—and was also sweetheart of Horatio's man, Sam (Olin Howland).

Who of us hasn't craved for independence? But I am afraid we do not know just what the word means in all senses; maybe we can profit from the lesson of Horatio and Sara. They were so darned poor, it hurt. They were happy, though they didn't know it—for they had work, real, live, honest-to-goodness work, but Horatio wanted independence, b'gosh.

As sudden as a cyclone came an inheritance of \$89,000,000 (did you know there was that much money left after the war?)—and here was Horatio's chance to get on the inside of the inde-

pendence game, and into it he did get, he, Sara, Sam and Lily; between evening clothes, baths, tight shoes and nothing to do but spend money, Horatio found he was not half so independent as he was down in the little ole bucolic dump, Kerchunkett, Maine, their own home town.

Mr. Flagg has his two unhappy, rich and not youthful couple sneak back to the old home, throw independence, store clothes and shoes to the winds, or whatever they use in the country for discarded wearing apparel, and his check book and bank balance he donates to Rockefeller, who cares more for money than anyone or anything else, and we leave them at the end of the second reel and a perfect day, enjoying their hard-earned independence, b'gosh.

* * *

And now here comes Ora Carew, heading her own company. It is beyond all conception where they get all the ambition, but they get it and in its most violent form. It takes them from the schoolroom, yes, I might almost say from the very laps of their mothers, up through small parts, then on up a little higher to perhaps a second to the lead, then chance helps them on their way

with a boost to the top rung of the ladder, "the lead"; but does ambition leave them there? Far be it from ambition to leave them high and dry after going so far; not so, it takes them on up and beyond—their wings have grown stronger, as they achieved success, until they are now able to soar alone.

Ora, if she has anything, has ambition, and, it would seem, in large quantity. It began to grow way back in the old Keystone Comedy days, when Mack Sennett, always with one comedy eye open for a new beauty to add to his cast, picked Ora and at the same time a long-time contract to star in Keystone-Triangle productions.

Now, Ora had ambition to do more serious work and at the end of her contract did a serial for Pathé, which is not yet released. Don't you remember the splendid work she did opposite Wallace Reid in "Too Many Millions"? Which proves that Ora's ambition was guiding her in the right direction. Also, must I mention her work with Tom Moore, in "Go West, Young Man." It is small wonder that Ora and her ambition felt she could "go it alone," so after finishing her picture with Tom, she was out on location filming the first scenes of her premier as a lone star. We have not yet been advised regarding the release or name of this picture.

Ora Carew hails from that salty State, Utah, yea, even from Salt Lake City, by which we do not insinuate anything. She is pretty enough for any old State to be proud of; a quantity of rich dark hair, and big brown eyes, although I think a trifle too serious; but that is perhaps due to the viewpoint she has of anything she undertakes—with her, whatever she is doing claims all the best that is in her. That is why Ora will make a sure bet as a star. Like all live girls, she can swim, dance and ride horseback.

Along comes Olive Thomas, with ambition all out of breath trying to keep up with her. Olive has so long been associated with Triangle and surrounded with such poor material, it is good to have her try her own wings and place herself in hands that will of a surety make the most of her talents and rare beauty. For Olive is beautiful—she is like an artistically cut cameo, pink and white, and glorious hair that matches her slumberous eyes; to describe the color of those eyes is impossible—they are blue, brown, grey, and all of these blended.

Myron Selznick, son of that well-known Select Pictures producer, is going to be responsible for just what Olive will do for us in the future. "Up Stars and Down" will have been released ere this—it's a dainty bit, like Olive, and for her first picture was well chosen. Her next, a story from the pen of one of SAUCY STORIES' constant contributors. The story ran as a serial in SAUCY STORIES in the early Spring of last year—"The Spite Bride." It is an ideal story for Olive, and I am anxiously looking forward to its release.

* * *

Do not fail to see Mitchell Lewis, Select Pictures star, in "Children of Banishment," adapted for the screen from the well-known novel of the same name, by Francis William Sullivan. The picture is under the direction of Norval MacGregor, who, in his earlier days, was leading man and later director and manager for Nance O'Neil. A great call has been made for the return of Mitchell Lewis as a star—the public had not forgotten his excellent work in "The Barrier," "The Bar Sinister" and "The Sign Invisible"; these placed Lewis in the high ranks as a portrayer of half-caste types, but his ability is versatile and he has been given a variety of roles since then, that proved him worthy of more pleasurable stories.

Select were awake to a future with Mitchell Lewis in features that will bring out all the bigness of his personality and evenly balanced screen acting. He is big and wholesome—one feels his bigness when meeting him personally. He has dark brown hair, that sort of crisps over his head, and eyes that match in color. He is a powerful swimmer and a lover of horses. In "Children of Banishment" he gives us the best work of his career as a screen artist.

* * *

A unique little folder containing some interesting bits of gossip about a certain sprightly little star came to me this morning. On its cover are the words, "Bessie Barriscale to Ye Photoplay Editor." Its contents are as unique as the cover, and I cannot resist quoting some of them to you. Since Bessie has been under the direction of her very own husband, Howard Hickman, an entirely new screen star has evolved before our eyes, which all goes to prove what I have been trying to prove to others, that the director has a lot and then some to do with the success or failure of a screen story.

Under the caption of "Honey" follows this—"Just how they fell to talking about bees and honey and the Padres nobody knows, but Bessie Barriscale astonished her party by her knowledge of bees. It was lunch hour for the Barriscale company on location near Redlands, when somebody said:

"The Old Mission honey made of orange blossoms, that the Padres used to clarify and put up in jars was the most famous honey in the world. It was the very heart's blood of the blossom."

"There is a kind of honey even sweeter, more fragrant and more delicious," said Bessie B., "and that is honey made from the blossom of the mesquite. It is heavenly and Arizona

is the place to get it, and that reminds me of a story an old Indian told me of the ways of bees. According to his lore the humble bee is the farmer of the bee family. He is easy going, good natured and a hard worker, but he has one fatal weakness—he loves to have his back rubbed.

"The honey-bee knows this and often when they meet him coming home laden with honey, they will engage him in friendly conversation and while one soothes him into blissful repose by rubbing his back, two or three others rob him of every smidgeon of honey he had worked all day to gather."

"All of which goes to show," said B. B., "that you can always get a man through his weakness—" Bessie ought to know—but—"Is bumble bee honey good to eat?" Bessie replies, "the field mice will tell you that is."

Another caption—"Busy Bees," heads this—"Bessie Barriscale is always telling stories on somebody else, so it's only fair to tell one on Bessie. A lady who had known this blonde lady since infancy, relates this story:

"Bessie was a member of the infant class at Sunday School and at a picnic given by her class, the teacher was taking advantage of their woodsy location to tell them something about trees. "Now, who can tell me the name of this tree?" she asked as the class approached a weeping willow.

"No one knew except Bessie. 'Well, Bessie?' asked the teacher, to which Bessie replied:

"It's a weeping widow." That will be(e) about all.

* * *

They were filming "The Bondage of Barbara," the new starring vehicle for Mae Marsh, at the Goldwyn studio. It was the scene where Barbara's brother is imprisoned in the attic of a roadhouse and faces a greater peril unless he is freed. So long as he is kept in hid-

ing a burglary will be charged against him—a crime for which Barbara has already paid the price. She must enter the roadhouse without attracting notice and remain in his place.

She was dressed in boy's clothes and shinned up the pole that led to the roof, gaining this, she made her way cat-like to the window and stole up to the attic, where she carried out her plan, and the sight of Miss Marsh shortening the distance between herself and the roof, with all the skill of an agile boy—or a burglar, was certainly an interesting and surprising moment. The funny part of it was, that she was so absolutely absorbed in her character of the moment, a boy, that it was impossible to think of her as a girl, in fact, she explains this unusual situation. "Wearing trousers was a novelty and had a psychological effect on me. I couldn't have been feminine had I wanted to. I just had to be a thoroughgoing urchin."

This scene comes toward the end of the picture and brings about a surprising climax and the exciting scene following Barbara's discovery by the "willuns" results in a conflict no less novel than her porch climbing—but that is another story and one which I believe you would rather "see" for yourselves.

I visited the Harold Lockwood studio just before his death, when they were taking the last scenes for his big Metro-Screen Classics picture, "The Great Romance," which has been recently released. It was an enormous set, representing the ball-room of a palace in a mythical kingdom and was nearly one hundred feet in length and about fifty wide. Every available foot of space on the studio was taken up with this scene. The floor was of fine Carrara marble effect, big wide entrances hung with heavy plush curtains and overhead great crystal chandeliers, one of them

hung over the center of the scene, being nine feet in diameter.

At one end of the room was a winding grand stairway of four landings, and in keeping with the scheme, the stairs also gave the appearance of marble. Over one hundred people were used in the set, staging a masked ball. This picture will long stand as a memorial to the memory of Harold Lockwood. It was the best and last work of his screen career, and this picture proves an old adage, that "the works of great men live after them," and, although Harold was not what one would call a "a great man," yet he had gathered unlimited admirers not only of his work but of his personality, and I for one, am glad of "The Great Romance."

* * *

Here is a little "close-up" of Gladys Leslie, Vitagraph's enchanting little screen star. Gladys hails from New York and is a product of Washington Irving High School and Columbia University—good work in minor parts must mean but one thing—that a producer would one day see her and capture Gladys and her fluffy light hair and laughing brown eyes. This is just what Albert Smith, president of Vitagraph did, and she is now their bright particular star.

Not only is Gladys lovely to look upon, but she has the ability to convey real spirit and meaning to her characterizations—she is the embodiment of youth and a real, live invitation to be happy, also she is appropriately called, "girl with the million dollar smile."

Gladys has for her latest Vitagraph picture "Fortune's Child." She is a little boarding house waif, whose faith in her tattered book of fairy tales keeps alive her belief in the world's goodness, and after a series of most remarkable adventures her dreams come true and the Knight of the book comes and takes her away. There is every reason to

prophecy that Gladys Leslie will in the future become more and more famous and acquire a goodly string of "fans" from Coast to Coast.

* * *

"And now they are asking for my shoes"—this is what Ruth Roland complains of her "fans." "They have asked me for almost everything under the sun, from a five-dollar-a-week annuity to a tractor with a gang plow equipment for use on the farm—but the most interesting thing I have ever been asked for was a complete outfit for a set of triplets from a father and mother in the Middle West—fancy that, now," and Ruth's merry laugh resounded all over the place, "but this last, a fad as prevalent as the 'flu,' has captured the Pacific Coast, shoe collecting."

"Who started it and why?"

"Oh, it seems a Second Lieut., admirer of a certain screen star, was presented with a pair of her shoes for a souvenir, and since then he conceived the idea of making a collection of 'picture shoes' or shoes worn by the screen actresses during certain pictures—did you ever hear of a such a silly fad—but it has spread all over out here, why, if I were to fill all the requests I have for my shoes, I would have to go barefooted the rest of my natural life."

"But what did you do about the outfit for the triplets, did they get it?"

"Well, I should rather say they did and my blessing as well, for I am a firm believer in families, but, perhaps, if you publish that, I will be overwhelmed with requests for outfits to all the triplets born in America, but at that, I think it far more commendable than furnishing shoes to soldiers, don't you?" I do.

* * *

Did you ever know that William Desmond, late of Triangle fame, was a "liar?" He is, and what is more he is a "prodigal liar." You will say, that I

certainly have an iron-clad nerve to come out in print with such a statement, but if you don't believe it go to see him in his newest, very newest release presented by Jesse D. Hampton, under whose management our old friend is now working. The name of this very entertaining picture is "The Prodigal Liar." Now, will you take back those cruel words you just now hurled at my head?

If you are a "Billy" Desmond "fan" you will enjoy his new picture immensely and, moreover, you will certainly enjoy the splendid work of Betty Compson, late of Mack Sennett comedies. It is one marvel after another, how these comedy girls turn out to be first rate actresses in serious rôles, but Betty carries the part of "Hope" evenly and consistently all the way through, and "Billy" seemed to actually enjoy working with her. That is, if one could judge from the complacent expression as he rested his head on Betty's lovely young knees.

"Hope" is a "Down East" girl who consumed paper novels depicting life in the great wide West. She was so full of romance there wasn't room for much else but dreams of a western hero, a gambler or even a murderous hold-up man, almost any man in that line of business, who would answer to her vision of Bill Hart.

Hope inherits money and at once communicated with an uncle who owned a ranch out West, and at the same time made it quite clear that she was anxious to mix right up into the wildest experiences he could provide.

It so happened that the only real bad man in Chapparral was locked up safely, or so they thought, and the girl had to be provided with the right stage setting—and here it is that Billy Desmond, in the person of Percival Montgomery Jenks, comes into the plot. "Monte," as his best friends called him, finally

after much persuasion, allowed himself to impersonate the "terrible" bad man, who hid in a cave and stole horses and killed and everything, yes he did. About the same time the real bad man escaped from the plaster of paris jail by a great feat of strength and the help of a file, which he had the forethought to bring with him to jail.

Ah, ha, he comes upon our now thoroughly in love couple and overhears the lies upon lies that "Monte" is recounting to Hope, of his desperate deeds and marvelous escapes from the law. Poor Hope doesn't want to marry a man with such unsafe habits, however romantic they may seem, so he tells her he has what is called "aphasia." My gentlemen readers will recognize it as a well worn and ancient alibi—however, Bill can be cured, so her uncle tells her, by inflicting a blow on his head. Well, she hits him all right and at the same time gets carried away not with, but by the bad man, who drags her by her arm pits and the aid of a handy pony far, far up into the mountains. Of course she is rescued by our hero and she forgives him his dreadful lies and they marry, always supposing they live happy ever after.

If you were to ask me to describe Pathe's release of the newest Rolin Comedy, "Hoot Mon," with Stan Laurel, I would say it is a refreshing Scotch highball with a dash of "pep." Stan Laurel, as you know, is the English comedian who has acted in a merry series of comedies for Rolin Comedy, keeps up a lively tempo, though at times a trifle unsteady, but withal, it is full of laughs and kilties and pretty Rolin girls in kilties and also has room for that ample and expansive comedienne, Margaret Joslyn, who is one of the best comedy actresses the screen has ever produced. Way back in Essanay times, when they were producing the Snakeville comedies, with Victor Potel, I remember her and have often wished she was not so infrequent in pictures.

Much of the action of "Hoot Mon" centers around Ye Blue Coo Inn, where all sorts of Scotch is served to all sorts of Scots, most of which is hot, both the Scotch and the Scots.

* * *

If any of my readers have a favorite screen player of whom they would like to know more, it will give me great pleasure to introduce them more intimately to their hero or shero.



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Of course Knowland did not guess that she usually began this way with his type. He forgot Helena waiting for him at home.

"A Bit of Crochet,"

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